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COPY

1930

We can make our minds so like
still water that beings gather
about us that they may see, it may
be, their own images, and so live for
a moment with a clearer, perhaps
even with a fiercer life because of
our quiet.

W. B. Yeats.

This book was donated by the Reverend William J. Fletcher for the use and delight of the faculty, students and friends of Sacred Heart University.

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STORIES, PLAYS, POEMS AND ESSAYS

Selected by

JOSEPH AUSLANDER ERNEST BRENNECKE
LORNA R. F. BIRTWELL HELEN HULL
DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH WARREN E. SCHUTT

From the published work of students in the special courses in writing, University Extension, Columbia University

INTRODUCTION BY
GLEN H. MULLIN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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To

JAMES CHIDESTER EGBERT

INTRODUCTION

That Columbia courses in creative writing are helping young writers to express themselves successfully enough to warrant publication of their work in a wide range of periodicals is convincingly attested by this, the seventh volume of *Copy*. I should like to state by way of explanation to those who are making its acquaintance for the first time that *Copy* is the annual anthology issued by The Writers Club of Columbia University, the members of which are students enrolled in the special writing courses. Each year a bitter controversy is waged among the faculty representatives on the publication committee as to the relative merits of the various stories, articles, plays, and poems submitted; for the wealth of good material often makes final selection difficult. All of the work in *Copy* has been previously published and paid for by reputable magazines, some of which are not particularly hospitable to new names.

The contention has frequently been made that college short story courses kill all native originality in the student by imposing upon him a stereotyped formula for manufacturing stories. His literary productions, it is insisted, are made, sealed and labeled by a factory canning process to which all the aspiring producers conform; so beneath the onus of a neat and glossy technique the vitality of the young artist is crushed. A careful examination of the stories, however, which have appeared in *Copy* from year to year will dispel this fallacious notion, so far as Columbia's fiction writing courses are concerned. The evidence of a great variety of technique manifest in *Copy* stories as a whole lends little credence to the suggestion that many potential Chekhovs are abroad in the land exhibiting the stumps of wings amputated in Columbia courses. As a matter of fact the variety of

story methods used by *Copy* writers ought to convince any unbiased reader that the instructors in charge of the courses must be fairly liberal in their interpretation of what constitutes a story. No method of instruction is canonized and no student is encouraged to swear allegiance to any immutable theory of fiction writing. He is free to work out the form in which his unique problem crystallizes itself most happily, the form that most plausibly or eloquently expresses his personal vision. This spirit of freedom is in harmony with the famous injunction of De Maupassant, "Make something beautiful in the form that suits you according to your personal temperament."

But frequently the form that suits the young writer's personal temperament is imperfectly realized by him, and here the teacher with understanding and sympathy and esthetic detachment can perform a valuable service. Through study taste may be refined, means of expression and devices necessary to the craft of story telling may be taught, the writer's growth stimulated and teased in the particular direction where his talent seems to seek its home.

Results observed over a considerable period show that enlightened guidance of this kind produces no uniformity in the work of the class. Even in instances where the instructor himself is a writer of note, although his students may view his writing with great admiration and respect, seldom are their own creative efforts colored by it. Some years ago I was a member of Robert Herrick's class in advanced fiction writing at the University of Chicago, and although we were all properly impressed by the distinguished style of our master, not a student in the class submitted a piece of work remotely suggesting the Herrick touch. It is interesting to note that students of painting are not so successfully insulated against the styles and outstanding mannerisms of teacher-painters who criticize studies from the model in the various ateliers of an art school. Here one may find pictures by the wholesale which are slavish and naïve attempts to reproduce the instructor's stylistic idiosyncrasies, his favorite color schemes, his tricks of composition. Whatever faults may

be found in the teaching of writing, such herd chameleonism as this is happily absent.

The foregoing remarks, it will be observed, have been devoted exclusively to the teaching of fiction. The problem of the article is somewhat different; since its task is chiefly to present facts in an attractive form for a popular, rapid-reading audience, it makes no literary pretensions and seldom attains a universal and permanent appeal. Many college students without pronounced imaginative and creative gifts turn to the craft of article writing feeling that there is a legitimate place in the world for well done popular exposition. At Columbia these students are trained in the methods of gathering material, in the organization of it according to an effective plan, and in the application of various technical devices to stimulate and maintain interest. Many articles are sold by students in University Extension and Home Study courses, but since the majority of these articles are frankly journalistic without the elements of a wide and lasting appeal, only a few of them in all fairness should be published in *Copy*. The more universal appeal of fiction would seem to justify the disproportionate number of short stories in the volume.

As to the poems represented in *Copy, 1930,* enough of these have been included to show that work of some distinction can be done by young poets under the direction of instructors who are themselves creative artists as well as teachers.

Students who are enrolled in the play writing courses at Columbia are enormously aided in their training by an organization known as The Morningside Players, through the medium of which the more promising class plays are tested by production before an actual audience. Each year a number of these plays are produced under conditions as nearly as possible resembling the professional theater. All members of the Writers Club are entitled to a reserved seat at any one of the performances of each play.

The Writers Club is now a lusty bantling of seven sturdy years. Hundreds of students from the Special Writing

Courses assemble to hear stimulating shop talks by distinguished authors and editors. Travel writers, humorists, poets, novelists, short story writers, dramatists, critics appear on the programs anxious to help the neophyte over the obstructions that beset him on the long, dark, and lonely road that leads to successful authorship.

In addition to the lectures delivered at the meetings of the Writers Club, the students of the Special Writing Courses have found profit and interest during the past year in reading the monthly issues of *MS.—A Magazine for Writers.* This periodical, published under the supervision of the English Department of Columbia University, was founded in the spring of 1929. It contains articles upon some phases of creative writing, editorials, reviews of books helpful to writers, and gossip, concerning the up-to-the-minute literary activities of instructors and students in Columbia Special Writing Courses. It also chronicles recent happenings in the publishing world of interest to those who hope to market their literary wares.

Before announcing the prizes awarded for the best short story, article, etc., published in *Copy, 1930,* it must be pointed out that among the short stories in the volume no juvenile story is included for the very good reason that during the past year the members of the Juvenile Writing Course have published books instead of short stories. Between November, 1928, and November, 1929, the advanced class in Juvenile Story Writing has published the following books:

The Winning Hazard, by Allen Chaffee (Century, 1929).

Little Blacknose, by Hildegarde Swift (Harcourt, Brace, 1929).

Windywhistle, by Zillah Macdonald (Appleton, 1929).

Prince of the Pale Mountains, by Anne Kyle (Houghton Mifflin, 1929).

My Grandpa's Farm, by Mary Wolfe Thompson (Stokes, 1929).

In addition to these was published *Blue Ribbon Stories* (Appleton, 1929), an anthology of the best juvenile stories selected from the magazines of the year by the class and

edited by Miss Mabel L. Robinson. Mrs. Swift's book, *Little Blacknose,* was chosen by The Junior Literary Guild. Miss Kyle's book, *Prince of the Pale Mountains,* was chosen by The Children's Book Club.

Students in the fiction writing courses have also published novels during the past year. Since stories of novel length cannot be included in an anthology, I shall list the titles here:

Sentry, by Heyward Canney (Harper's).

Pleasure First, by Marjorie Fischer (Macaulay).

Relatives, by Russell Neale (Harper's).

Treadmill, by Lola Jean Simpson (Macmillan).

Of these *Relatives* and *Treadmill* are second novels. Five other novels have been accepted for early publication.

Now as to the prize awards for 1930! As in previous years a committee of well-known authors and editors were chosen to select the winners.

The short stories were passed upon by Denver Lindley, Fanny Heaslip Lea, and Viola Paradise. Mr. Blackman's story "Hot Copy" was the only one to appear upon the lists of all three judges. It received a first, a second, and a third rating; so first prize goes to "Hot Copy." As "Pioneer" and "Ugly" both received a first rating, the second prize is divided between Mr. Huse and Mrs. Estabrook. Mr. Lindley commented on "Hot Copy" as "swift and effective narrative, adequate characterization, excellent continuity." Miss Lea preferred "Ugly" as "a simple, direct and rounded piece of workmanship . . . its characterization excellent; its color delightful—neither artificial nor obtrusive; and its dialogue natural and at times moving."

Frank Crowninshield, Boyden Sparkes and Elizabeth Adams kindly consented to judge the articles. First place goes to Nellie Sergent's "High School Poets" since it received one first rating and two seconds. Victor Nelson's "Is Honesty Abnormal?" takes second prize with one first rating and one second. Miss Adams characterized "High School Poets" as "a very natural, well-planned article with

a shy enthusiasm underneath that keeps it from being pedantic."

The judges of the poems were John Erskine, Mark Van Doren and Frank Hill. Mary Barber's "A Man of Action" with two first ratings captures the poetry prize.

The plays for *Copy, 1930* were judged by Hatcher Hughes, Mack Gorham, and Milton Smith. They unanimously accord the prize to "Wilderness Road" by Anne Collins and Alice Timoney. Because of lack of space only the prize winning play could be included in this volume.

GLEN H. MULLIN.

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COPY ✶ 1930

HOT COPY *

By M. C. BLACKMAN

THERE never was another person, I guess, who hated newspapers and reporters like this author chap, Arthur M. Dodd. I wish I could get that guy off my mind.

If he saw me again, he would not know me from Adam's off ox, but he has been quite an influence in my life, and I may turn out to be a famous writer on account of him. He was the cause, in a way, of me becoming a newspaper reporter, and now he has started me practicing to be an author.

I'd just as soon he never got any closer acquainted with me, because if he knew all there is to know, he might get real nasty.

It was last week I met him in a speakeasy. Not that I am a boozer, but every man has to have a little drink now and then to steady him up. When I went in Dodd was sitting humped down in a chair and, in spite of the way he looked, I remembered him from that time up-state when I got to be a reporter.

I cannot express it how that man looked. It gave me a feeling, and I am used to things. His face was as white as this piece of paper, except for a ragged set of whiskers; and his clothes looked like nothing to make a tailor proud. But it was his eyes that got me. Fishy, they were, but more like two agate marbles in a pile of sand. He did not look up, but just sat there like a lump.

Feeling kind of creepy, I ordered a shot of whisky straight, when I had meant to have only a highball. After

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I gulped it down I stood there thinking about how this Dodd had changed. Three years ago he was as fine a looking chap as they grow in this neck of the woods. Everybody was predicting what a wonderful future he had before him. He worked his way through college, with some help from a widowed mother, and had got quite a rep as a writer. I never could go his stuff, it was so queer; but the critics called him one of the Younger Philosophers, whatever that stands for.

But you could see he was a wreck now. Booze got him, and they say he is a dope, too. He hardly ever writes any more and spends what coin he has for liquor and dope. He spends a lot of his time in Chicago, hanging around taxi stands. I know why, and I might tell him a thing or two, but it is not any of my business.

Mike, the bartender, started kidding me about a story we had in the *Star* that day, and I was giving him the low down, when Dodd sat up in his chair and glared at us.

"Newspapers!" he said, almost choking. "Buzzards!"

That was a queer thing to say, but he did not say anything else. He sank back in his chair, and I noticed he looked at the liquor I had in my glass, with his mouth working. I figured he was short of coin and needing a drink. I saw he did not know me.

"Drink up, brother," I told him. "What will you have?"

"Thanks," he said, and shuffled up to the bar, ordering a shot. He could hardly wait for the bartender to set it on the counter, he was so eager. But he never drank that shot.

"What you said about newspapers," I began. "Now I am a newspaperman myself—"

Say, I have had people to look at me without any love in their eyes before. A fellow with my job has to get used to it. But this Dodd looked at me as though I had suddenly broke out with a filthy disease. I never saw anything so unfriendly in my life. I could guess why, but he ought to know that some things are like that.

"Scum!" he said, and what does the nut do next but pour that glass of good whisky in the cuspidor.

Well, I never argue with gin-heads when they have been drinking, and it is no use getting insulted at things they say. They ain't right.

"Oh, if that is the way you feel about it, all right with me," I said. "It will probably do you more good in the cuspidor anyway."

But the poor prune could not stand it without a drink any longer. He came back to the bar and parked by me.

"I say, my friend," he remarked. "I am not quite myself to-day. If you will just forget what I said and renew your offer of a drink I will be obliged."

So I bought him another drink, and we got to talking. He was willing to talk as long as I bought the drinks, and I kept Mike pretty busy awhile. I saw he was sore on newspapers, so I dropped that and started talking about being an author.

I asked him if he thought I could learn to write short stories, and he said sure, it would be easy for a man with intelligence like me. Of course, I knew he was soaping me for the drinks, but still I am no nitwit.

I asked him how to go about it, and he said it would be best to get a good book on short-story writing and learn what he called the "mechanics" of writing, and then just write about everyday things that happened around me. That crack about "mechanics" gave me pause, as they say, because it sounded like work, and I always thought people who wanted to be authors just sat down and dashed off a couple of hot yarns and sent them off.

Anyway, I set up once more for Dodd and left him there looking more than ever like a last year's bird nest. I decided I would take his advice and try the thing out. While I have not got anything to say against newspaper work, because it is high class, still, I figure a man with brains ought to get into the magazine game where the big money is.

First, I have got to get used to writing. I am a street man and I phone in all my stuff to the fellows on the desk, and they set it down, put in the commas and all the "alleges" so it will read smooth and still be safe. It is my

story, of course, but working that way I do not get much practice at writing. I expect my grammar is not as pure as the editors like, but I can learn that easy.

I am writing this for practice and another reason. I expect that as soon as a man becomes a famous author the editors and the public are going to want to know something about him. So while I am practicing I am going to set down a few facts about my life, and when my history is needed it will be all ready. What I say will be the truth, and what I leave out will be nobody's business.

The less said about my early life the better, but there are a few things I want to mention before somebody else does. It is a cinch that denials in print are about as useless as arguments with traffic cops. They do no good. When I am on a story, I always say, "Now listen here, friend; say what you've got to say *first.* Deny charges before they are made, or in the same edition, anyway." And it usually works.

So nobody is going to put it over on Henry Jasper Brown —that's me—by digging up some past history of mine and giving *their* version of it. I got nothing to be ashamed of, but I know my newspapers.

I was born in Leavenworth, Kansas. Most people think that is only a prison, but it is a town also, and people live there. When I was born my old man was inside the walls. Maw was living outside, waiting for Dad to get out. He never did. He died in there when I was twelve years old, and he had three years to go. It was just as well he kicked off, because he died with Maw thinking he was a fine man and believing he got a dirty deal. I'm wise, and I know she would have learned different if he had got out. It seems he was doing right well selling gold bricks to farmers and then he switched over to peddling dope. The federals got him. But what is the use of going into details about that? It was just one of those things, as they say.

Maw laid the leather on me and made me go to school until I got too big to handle, and I skipped out. Don't think I threw her down, because I did not. I believe every

man ought to keep at least one of the ten commandments, and I picked out the one about honoring thy father and mother. I could not do much by the old man, but I always honored Maw. I sent her money when I had it and letters when I didn't. Now she has got a snug little cottage in Leavenworth and plenty of time to tinker with the radio, which she is bugs about. I go to see her every year or two.

Skipping over the next few years after I left home, in which nothing criminal or interesting happened to me, we come to this city, which is what I did.

I arrived here about the same time as a high-powered newspaper editor from New York, but I did not know then how important that was. My only interest in newspapers was in the "Male Help Wanted" columns. But even I noticed the change that came over the smallest of the two afternoon papers.

I mean it was very noticeable. It seems that the *Star* was bought by a company that owns a string of papers all over the country, all of them snappy, readable sheets. And how that little *Star* began to twinkle. It blossomed forth with three-inch streamers in red ink on pink paper, and more pictures than a family album. That New York editor, Mr. Morton, sure knew his headlines. A few weeks later I heard about his orders to the staff.

"Boil it down," he said, "and make it snappy. Then throw it away and fill the hole with pictures. Any fool can look at pictures, and our readers are fools."

Fools or not, they bought the *Star*. The circulation jumped from a few thousand to six figures, and believe me, the opposition was sick! It still is, but it tries to be scornful now. But it is hard to laugh off a rival circulation of two-three hundred thousand. The *Telegram* is so old it creaks, and as dignified as your maiden aunt. The editor still thinks a newspaper should be read and not seen!

Mr. Morton hired almost as many cameramen as he had reporters, which was plenty. The snappers were all smart fellows, most of them from New York, and they knew their photos. Mr. Morton fitted out two trucks like regular

studios, so the snappers could print their pictures on the way back to the office, and the speed they showed was a marvel. Editions every couple of hours and all of them hot.

I got a job driving one of the studio trucks. It was easy because I had been a taxi driver once.

It was like getting paid for having fun. That was three years ago when I thought eighteen dollars a week was good money. I got interested in the newspaper business the first week, and it did not take me long to get the hang of it, which is more than I can say for some of the old *Star* reporters, who pretty soon found themselves looking for jobs. But as I may have mentioned before, I am no dumb Isaac, and I could see that a picture of the pretty girl who saw the robbery was more important than a snap of the homely clerk who was robbed. That is first-reader stuff. I learned a lot from the snappers, too.

The third week I worked, there was a queer story broke in Wego, a small burg in an up-state county. The correspondent sent in a small item about plumbers finding the skeletons of two human bodies buried under the basement of the cottage of Mrs. Emmaline Dodd. That was all, just three-four lines.

Most editors would have passed that by, but not Mr. Morton. He had not been here but a couple of months, but he clicked right away on that name Dodd. He knew that anything connected with the Dodd family was good copy, on account of the son of the family, the son being this same young writer chap, Arthur M. Dodd, which I met last week in the speakeasy. Mr. Morton hopped right on the story, figuring two skeletons in the basement was almost as good as one in the closet.

I saw that item in the paper and was interested because I had heard of the little burg, Wego, once before. Buck Hodges, a taxi driver I knew in Chicago, had a little skirt on his string, and she said she was from Wego.

Her name was Sylvia Laverne, and she wanted to be an actress until Buck came along. She was a cute little trick,

with a funny little dimple in her left cheek, but she was too young. I told Buck he ought to pick them a little older and he finally got wise and chucked her.

Mr. Morton sent a reporter, a snapper, and me up there to Wego. He picked me to drive the truck because the snapper told him I was always a lot of help, and I guess I was. It is a good thing he sent me, as things turned out. The reporter was named Anthony Watkins and he was one of those kind I call lily-handed. He was always dreaming and he did not seem to know what everything was all about. The only reason they kept him, I guess, was that he was really fluent on the typewriter, and they sent him up to Wego because they figured there probably would be a whole lot to write about nothing much. But I did not care for him.

Dick Burch was the photo expert and he was a good egg. He and I went up in the truck, which was only a two-hour drive, and Watkins followed on the train. We got there first and had time to look around a bit before the train got in.

We did not need much time to see all there was in Wego, which is like a million other towns that tourists try to dodge when they think of stopping for the night. One street (which was just a rough spot in the highway), a few stores, a few more houses, a big barn that passed as a hotel, the railroad station—and that is the picture of Wego. A half mile away was the lake, and by it the Dodd cottage. We drove by it for a once-over, and it almost made me homesick. It looked a lot like Maw's place, with vines and flowers and a garden.

There was nobody at home. Arthur Dodd had been abroad nearly three years studying and writing, and he had made enough money to send his mother to California. His sister had gone there already to try to break into the movies and had drowned there, it seemed, just six months before all this happened. Her mother had been with her in Los Angeles several months before she got drowned. The old man had been dead for years, so there was only Arthur and

his mother left. Arthur was having the cottage fixed up before Mrs. Dodd came back.

We got back to the station just as the train came in, causing great excitement among the natives as usual. Watkins got off and so did a man from the *Telegram*. One man, mind you. But there was a third passenger for Wego, which added to the excitement, because it was the first time in ten years three people had got off there at one time. At least that is what I heard a guy say.

But my eyes popped when I saw that third man. He was Arthur M. Dodd himself. I knew him because it was only a week before that the *Star* carried a four-column picture of him, announcing his engagement to a swell New York society girl, who he fell in love with abroad.

And there was this dumb Watkins who had been on the same train with him two hours and never got wise. You could not expect anything better of a *Telegram* man, but a *Star* man ought to be awake. I grabbed Watkins and whispered the tip. He looked kind of funny and excited.

"Are you sure?" he asked me.

"Hell's bells!" I said. "Ask him questions, not me."

From the way this Watkins looked at Dodd you would have thought he was looking at a god. I had heard him say he thought Dodd was a wonderful writer, but I did not think he actually worshiped the man, even if he did make lots of jack with his writing. They hardly mentioned the skeletons, and I was disgusted. Instead, Dodd talked about his mother and how wonderful she had been to him. He also told how much he loved his sister, Mary Lou, and how shocked he had been when his mother cabled him about her being drowned. Mrs. Dodd would not let him come home, he said, because the body had never been found, and there was no use. Dodd seemed to take to Watkins, though I could not see why.

Well, Dick got busy, anyway, and while the *Telegram* man was still arguing with the half-dead hotel clerk, Dick and I were on our way back to the city with pictures of Dodd, the

cottage with X marking the entrance to the basement, and a general view of Wego.

We had a layout in the final edition with a line:

YOUNG WRITER VIEWS GHASTLY FIND

There was some art work and a drawing of Dodd staring at two skeletons. The sketch of him looked more like a traveling salesman with the heebie jeebies than anything else, but the skeletons were plenty lifelike, if you get what I mean.

The pictures were fine, but there was not much to the story. It told about Dodd's return, and about finding the skeletons, one adult and one baby. Dodd was quoted as saying the cottage had not been occupied for nearly a year and that neither he or his mother had any idea how the things got under the basement.

It wasn't much, but it stirred up interest in the case, and hot news was scarce. When Dick and I got back to Wego next day we found one of the Chicago papers had sent up a man and a photographer, and it began to look as if things might turn out interesting after all.

The probe of the skeleton case, as we say in the headlines, was being carried on by the county coroner and the prosecutor. So far they had learned that two bodies, one adult and one baby, had been found under the basement of the Dodd cottage by plumbers. Which was pretty good for them.

But being prodded by the reporters, the coroner crashed through with the statement that one of the skeletons was of a woman and the other of a very young infant. He also opined that they could not have been there more than two years, and gave a long explanation about the nature of the soil and something or other causing the flesh to decay quick. Not very sweet copy, but Watkins dressed it up pretty well, and we beat the *Telegram* on story and pictures. I decided Watkins might be half human after all.

I was a little disappointed over what the coroner said about the woman and the baby being dead at least two

years, because I had been wondering if there could be any connection between the large skeleton and Mary Lou Dodd. It was just one of those wild hunches. But the Doc seemed to know his bones. It began to look as though a country dame and her baby had been bumped off and buried under the Dodd cottage while they were away, though why the murderer should pick that spot with the lake and miles of woods close at hand was more than I could figure out. And every female in Wego was well accounted for.

I did not see where a new lead for the story next day was coming from. Watkins did not seem to care, but settled down in the hotel lobby with a pencil and some paper. Probably he was writing poetry or figuring his expense account, or doing some other imaginative work. Some people are funny.

But I am a man of action, and I went out to stir around. I spent a pretty busy afternoon pottering around the Dodd place and talking to people, and then Dick and I went back to the city.

Next day I sort of casually suggested to the prosecutor when nobody else was around that it might be a good idea to look around the place for a weapon or something that might have caused death. He said he had not thought of that.

We could not shake off the other reporters, so the whole gang of us went down to the Dodd house and searched all over it, Arthur Dodd helping and chatting with Watkins. Then we went outside and looked around, but did not find any blunt instruments or anything else that looked dangerous.

Before we left I sort of accidentally kicked at a flower pot near the outside basement entrance. It broke and when the dirt fell apart there was a small bottle in it. It was empty, but it had a poison label on it.

Everybody got excited except Watkins, and he looked at the bottle two or three times and then just looked bored. The prosecutor made an official statement about the find, the snappers took pictures, and the reporters sent in some more

real news. All except Watkins. Honestly that bozo got my goat.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked him. "Ain't you going to phone about this?"

"No," he said.

"Are you crazy?" I snapped. "Why in blazes are you passing up the only news you got to-day?"

"Because," he said, "I didn't like the looks of a brand new poison label on a two-year-old bottle, if it was that old. That stuff was planted."

Well, he had me there. I clean overlooked the new label feature when I fixed it up. Yes, I might as well admit it was my job. Why not? It did no harm. Nobody else noticed my bust, but this Watkins is like that. But he thought it was the Chicago man did it.

However, I was determined the *Star* was not going to miss out on it after all my trouble, so I sneaked away and did some telephoning on my own. We had the story all right, but Watkins saw a late edition and he thought it had been rewritten from the other papers. He did not like it, but he liked even less what he got an hour or so later. Mr. Morton telephoned him. I figured it would be too good to miss, so I slipped over to the clerk's desk and picked up the receiver of an extension phone.

"Why didn't you send in something on that poison bottle?" the boss asked.

Watkins explained he was sure it had been planted, and gave his reasons.

"Now, listen to me, young man," Mr. Morton said. "You were sent up there to find news, not to kill it. And when the prosecutor makes a statement, it is news. Understand?"

Watkins came away from the telephone looking like he had smelled a bad tomato. I had to laugh.

Dodd told the coroner and the prosecutor next day that his mother was coming home and he asked them if they could not finish with the case before she got in, because he was afraid it might upset her worse than she was. But the poison bottle kept the thing alive and they were still looking

for "clues" when Mrs. Dodd arrived in Wego from California.

I clipped all the stories about that case, and I will copy the piece Watkins wrote about Mrs. Dodd, because it just goes to show how wrong some reporters can be. Also because that story got me started to doing some investigation of my own. He wrote:

It is almost impossible to think of horrible things in connection with Mrs. Emmaline Dodd, who arrived here to-day after a year in California, for a reunion with her son, Arthur M. Dodd, well-known young writer, whom she had not seen since he went abroad nearly three years ago.

Two things marred their otherwise complete happiness in the meeting. One was the official investigation into the finding of two human skeletons beneath the tiny, vine-covered cottage where Mrs. Dodd lived happily for so many years and reared her two children to manhood and womanhood after a bitter struggle with poverty while they were mere babies.

The other shadow was their grief over the death of the daughter and sister, Mary Lou Dodd, who was drowned in California six months ago. Mrs. Dodd's sorrow has weighed heavily upon her, judging from her appearance to-day. She is a frail little woman, with dark, appealing eyes and the look of one who has suffered much and borne it well.

One marvels that she ever survived the struggles that must have been hers when she was left alone with two young children after the death of her husband eighteen years ago. With no resources other than the tiny home and her own capable fingers, she sewed for the villagers, tended a garden, and managed somehow to make ends meet. It is no wonder that Arthur Dodd is passionately devoted to her.

She has always been completely wrapped up in her two children, for whom she worked so many years. The sudden death of her daughter shattered half of her world. It was doubly hard, at a time when she was beginning to find real happiness in the success of her son.

Mrs. Dodd was so overcome with grief that she has never been able to furnish many details of the tragedy. For some reason, the California papers made no mention of the drowning, which occurred at a little-known beach resort, and the

story did not reach this section of the country until the cablegram was received in Paris by Arthur.

There is a story that Mary Lou Dodd ran away from home a few years ago, fired with schoolgirl ambitions to go on the stage. Her mother, with understanding sympathy, persuaded her to return. Then, when she became convinced that the girl would never be content in Wego, she consented to her going to California to stay with a friend and seek a trial in motion pictures. She had little success in the already overcrowded field of filmdom, but it is understood that she was happily employed in a library at the time of her death.

Mrs. Dodd was too shocked by the gruesome discovery under her home to discuss it with reporters, and her son asked that she be excused from an interview.

Most of that is a lot of hooey, but it shows how Watkins was plumb sold on the Dodd family. Besides, there were two items that interested me a whole lot, and gave me a powerful hunch. One was that thing about Mary Lou Dodd running away from home, and the other was the reminder that Mrs. Dodd had been away from home only one year. And the coroner had said those bodies had been buried at least two years! I hadn't thought of it before, and neither had anybody else, but it looked as if Mrs. Dodd was living right there in the cottage when that woman and baby were buried.

Dick and I went back to Wego the day Mrs. Dodd arrived, instead of staying all night in the city like we had been doing. It was Saturday night, and I decided to talk to some of the natives. I went into the barber shop and risked my life getting a shave. Business was dull, so I sat around awhile talking to the barber, and to pep him up I gave him a few pulls at a bottle of bootleg I happened to have with me.

With a few slugs of liquor under his belt, how that barber did talk! He wasted enough language on me to last him six Saturdays in a city shop. Finally, I got him to talking about Mary Lou Dodd, and it was not long before he crashed through with a remark that nearly knocked my eye out.

"What was that?" I asked him, sitting up straight.

The barber grinned at me like something evil and then blinked like an owl.

"I say I got my own ideas about Mary Lou going away to California to join the movies," he said. "I think it was something different. After she came back from Chicago, where she run away, her Maw kept her pretty close at home. But I was down by the lake one day and I saw her. She looked like if she wasn't married, she ought to of been. Only I never heard tell of a husband. Pretty soon after that she went to California."

"How do you know she went to California?" I shot at him.

The barber looked puzzled.

"Why everybody knew it," he said. "Ain't she been gone these two years? Didn't she drown down there?"

"I know, but did anybody see her leave town? I mean, on a train or in a car?"

"Why, no; I don't reckon as there was anybody as did see her leave. Mrs. Dodd just told the postmaster her daughter had gone to California, and he spread it around. Why, do you mean—?"

But I had left him quick. I beat it back to the hotel and found Watkins sitting there in the lobby, reading a book of short stories by this Arthur M. Dodd. I guess he never got such a surprise from a truck driver in his life before.

"Listen, Watkins, that woman's skeleton they found was Mary Lou Dodd," I said. "And the baby was hers," I added for good measure.

"Nonsense," he snapped, looking hard at me and sniffing. "Are you drunk?"

"Never was more sober or serious in my life," I came back at him. "And I'll bet a week's pay I got the right hunch."

"Why don't you read the papers?" he asked me. "Mary Lou Dodd was drowned in California."

"Who said so? The body was never found, and Mrs. Dodd put out the only dope the newspapers ever had."

"Besides, Mary Lou was never married, so the baby could not have been hers," was the next crack of this dumb reporter.

"Don't be silly. Pharaoh's daughter was never married either, but she found little Moses in the bulrushes," I said. I used to go to Sunday School back in Leavenworth and got many a laugh out of it.

Then I told him the barber's story, and how nobody ever saw Mary Lou leave Wego, and when I got through pointing out this and that, Watkins was beginning to take notice. He also looked kind of sick, and I guess he was thinking about that plap he wrote about Mrs. Dodd.

"And it looks to me," I ended, "like Mary Lou and her baby were murdered, and I would not need two guesses to pick out the old lady as the guilty party. She probably thought she was doing it for her daughter's own good. Let's go get the prosecutor and the coroner and get busy while the opposition sleeps upstairs."

Watkins was still not as anxious as he might have been, but he came along. We dragged the officials out of bed and they did not growl much. It took a lot of talking, with me doing the most of it, to convince them; but finally they saw the light. They were all for action.

"Now, lemme see," said the prosecutor, "they may be awake yet at the cottage. Let's go there and talk to Mrs. Dodd some."

"Come along, young man," the coroner said to me. "I don't remember seeing you around here before, but you seem to know a lot about this thing."

Arthur Dodd, still dressed, came to the door and asked us to come in. I noticed he looked worried. The prosecutor asked to see his mother.

"My mother is confined to her bed," said Dodd. "She has had a nervous breakdown. Can I be of service to you?"

"Well, I dunno," sad the prosecutor, who was a soft-hearted gink for a man of his calling. "This is important, mighty important. Could you come down to my office with me a little while?"

Dodd looked puzzled, but he came along. I thought they ought to have left somebody to guard the house, but I did not like to say so in front of Dodd. So we all went back to the prosecutor's temporary office over the drugstore.

"Arthur," said the prosecutor in a kind voice, "we have got reason to believe that one of those skeletons found under your house was your sister, Mary Lou, and it looks pretty bad."

Dodd jumped out of his chair and turned pale as a ghost.

"That is absurd," he shouted. "My sister was drowned only six months ago in California."

Well, the prosecutor talked on for about an hour, and asked questions. And say, he was not so dumb as he looked, either. Dodd kept getting more and more nervous and worried, pacing back and forth and messing up his hair. Finally, the prosecutor said gentlelike that he guessed he would have to arrest Mrs. Dodd for murder.

"No! No!" Dodd begged. "Wait! I will tell you the whole story, just as my mother told it to me to-day. It would kill her if she were arrested and the story got out. But I will tell you, and I am sure you will do what is right."

Then he told his story, and oh, what a story! The part about Mary Lou was just about as I had figured it out. He told how his sister was high-strung and impulsive and crazy to be an actress or a movie star.

"She ran away from home, soon after I went abroad," Dodd said, still pacing. "She was little more than a kid, and had never been away from home much, so she hadn't the least idea what to do when she got to Chicago. She assumed a fanciful name, but that was as near as she ever got to the stage.

"After a week, she fell into the clutches of a man—a taxicab driver—who took advantage of her youth and innocence. He got her into trouble and then left her. She, poor kid, was terrified, so she came home to mother and confessed everything. She never told all the details, but it was easy to piece together her story.

"My mother was nearly crazy with grief and shame,"

Dodd continued, looking kind of crazy himself. "She feared publicity and scandal, because she was afraid it would ruin my career as well as Mary Lou's life. She made Mary Lou stay in the house, while she worried and prayed. There was no one to whom she could go for advice."

Dodd stopped a minute and looked in a queer way at the book Watkins had in his hand. It was the same book Watkins had been reading at the hotel, and Dodd looked as though he halfway expected it to say something. I do not think he ever actually saw any of us there except the prosecutor and maybe Watkins. I remember every word he said and how he said it, because I was more than interested. I got to thinking about Buck Hodges back in Chicago. I guess it is a good thing for him he turned bootlegger and went East.

"My mother kept putting off calling the doctor from day to day," Dodd went on. "Finally it was too late. Then she closed up the house and did what she could, herself, for Mary Lou. She knew nothing about such things, and Mary Lou and the baby both died. After that, my mother had only one thought, and that was to keep the thing a secret. All alone in that house with the bodies, she dug a place in the basement and buried them. How she did it alone, I do not know. She must have been a little demented."

Dodd shook like a leaf and covered his face with his hands. That last was the part I could not figure out by myself, but I saw he was telling the truth. There was nobody in the room doubted him. He went on with the story, but the rest was simple. Mrs. Dodd had lived alone in the cottage a year, after letting it out that Mary Lou had gone to California, not even writing her son what had happened. Then she went to join her daughter, so everybody thought, and six months later she sent word back that Mary Lou had drowned, which nobody doubted. Not even Arthur.

I began thinking what a whale of a story that was going to be, and I could picture already the eight-column strip of art across the front page, with a story that would be as long as the columns lasted. Mr. Morton believes in boiling

stuff down, but he would throw out everything but the ads for a really good story. And this was one of the best.

It was not as sensational, maybe, as a good murder would have made it, but was chockful of what the boss calls human interest.

I suddenly noticed that Watkins was talking.

"I am the only newspaper man present," he was saying, "and I promise I will forget what you have said. And of course I will not say anything about it to my rivals."

He shook hands with Dodd and looked like he was about to cry. But that crack of his floored me, and I could not make head or tail of it. I did not pay much attention to what followed, only I did hear the prosecutor say that of course he would drop the matter and just make a formal report about finding the bodies of two persons who came to their deaths from unknown causes. I had a sneaking suspicion that Watkins had meant what he said, if you can imagine it. I soon learned.

"I certainly do not intend to write anything about it," he replied to my question. "That family has suffered enough, and there are some things even a newspaper reporter will not do. If you have a shred of decency about you, you will never mention what you have heard from Dodd."

"Decency, my aunt," I retorted. "Who are you to be speaking such fine words? Ain't you about to throw down your paper on the biggest story it ever had? A fine newspaperman you turned out to be."

"Brown," he said, looking at me in that nasty way of his, "I am convinced you have no finer sensibilities whatever."

"Maybe I got no sensibilities," I said, "but I got sense, and that will buy more groceries."

"All right," he said, turning away. "Tell Morton I have resigned."

And a good thing, too, I thought. A guy like that has got no business in the newspaper game. He ought to join a sewing circle. I learned later he joined the *Telegram,* which is just as bad.

It was almost daylight by then, and I waited around the

hotel, going over the story in my mind and eating breakfast. Then I put in a call for the *Star* about the time for Mr. Morton to come down.

"Mr. Morton," I said, "this is Brown. Driving your studio truck up here at Wego. I got a good story, which your reporter fell down on."

Then I told him all about it, brief, but not forgetting to mention that I had had a good deal to do with it. I could hear him sputtering at the other end of the line.

"Listen, Brown," he barked at me. "Tell just enough of that to a rewrite man for the first edition— No! Wait! Do any of the other reporters up there even suspect any of this?"

"Not a suspicion," I told him.

"Come into the office as fast as that truck will bring you," he ordered. "Tell Watkins he is fired." So they were even.

Well, it was a fine story. We beat the whole world, and the front page was all art and my story. A rewrite man wrote it, but it was my yarn. It was hot copy, believe me, and darn good for a beginner like me. But the best was yet to come.

"Brown, do you know anything about writing?" Mr. Morton asked me.

"No, sir," I said, "but—"

"Brown," he said, "don't learn. I can see right now you are going to be my star reporter."

And Mr. Morton mostly knows what he is talking about.

Well, Mrs. Dodd died a few weeks later. She did not look very healthy when I saw her that time in Wego. Arthur Dodd had some kind of trouble with his girl and they called the match off. I guess he started hitting the booze, and drinking is bad for you if you do it regular. I never saw him again until last week in that speakeasy, and I don't care if I never see him again.

SATURDAY-NIGHT BEANS *

By RUTH BLODGETT

ON Saturday nights it was supper, not dinner, at the Bascoms. An almost religious ceremonial, with Papa Bascom the presiding high priest, reconsecrating himself and his family to his New England heritage, dedicating them all anew to the sanctity of the home—mamma and the girls!

Papa's round eyes always shone as he reached up his short arms and helped himself to the baked beans, swimming in rich, brown juice, dotted with savory salt pork, deftly passed by Dorset.

"Nearly as good as my own mother's. Highest praise, mamma!"

Mamma, the high priestess of the beans, had been instructed years ago just how to prepare them like "my own mother's." The soaking, the parboiling, the proper dash of mustard, salt, and pepper, plenty of pork, plenty of water, a well-seasoned bean-pot with a cover, a slow oven—as if she could ever forget! During the first years she had prepared them herself. Now she told Dorset, who told cook.

"Don't take too many, papa. Remember they're apt to distress you, dear."

"Nonsense, mamma! Not beans like these! Tell cook, Dorset, they're just right to-night."

"Yes, Mr. Bascom."

Every Saturday night papa was expansive with his praise as with his serving. But mamma, Gwendolyn, and Wilhelmina helped themselves sparingly. And Hope refused them. The boys, on the other hand, Gwendolyn's and Wilhelmina's

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husbands, liked beans: "Great stuff! Some cooks back there in little old New England!" Anyway, they liked to stand in with papa.

Papa Bascom was satisfied with his girls.

"None of these cigarette-smoking, rum-drinking, career-hunting"—he could never bring himself to say *sexless*—"creatures in our family, mamma!"

"No, dear." She liked to stand in with papa, too.

"I wish Hope was more like the other two though. It isn't natural for a girl not to like beaux and dances—just to hum and strum all the time—"

"Hope's all right, papa. Maybe she'll be the most interesting of the three."

"Interesting? What do you mean, mamma? Go off and do—some stunt? We don't want that kind—only honest-to-goodness girls, who'll be honest-to-goodness wives and mothers. The rocks of American society, mamma!"

Silence.

"Isn't that so?"

"Yes, dear."

Papa was *so* much pleasanter when his neat little mouth was allowed to quirk up at the corners than when he looked stern or anxious.

And no wonder papa was satisfied—with mamma keeping the home running like clockwork, and with the nice, wholesome girls married to good, clean boys (all but Hope), and with the grandchildren coming—every so often.

Not to forget the stores! Bascom's markets—cash and carry—a chain of them!

In the early days one of the white starched aprons must have looked nice on papa. Now he had an upholstered, mahoganied office, and he made only an occasional triumphal tour of inspection to the stores.

At such times he would stalk in a pleasantly pompous way up and down the aisles. It was merely a gesture. For there was no need for him to bother with details now, when one son-in-law was treasurer and the other purchasing manager of the company.

Papa was satisfied with his home, too. He had bought the house after Gwendolyn and Wilhelmina had arrived. A pretentious conglomeration of field-stone and clapboards, built in the period of bay windows and turrets!

In mamma's funny mind Gwendolyn and Wilhelmina were somehow mixed up with the two couchant lions at the entrance. Papa had been the one to name Gwendolyn and Wilhelmina—names like lions, in vogue at the time. And Gwendolyn and Wilhelmina grew up just the sort of girls papa wanted, went off to boarding-school, came home, got married, had babies. . . . Wives, mothers. . . . Lions, guarding the sanctity of the home. They both had their own homes near by, now.

Mamma was not so satisfied, although papa never guessed that she was not.

But mamma had once had dreams, all mixed up with a few art lessons in her teens, and doing things not too conventional. . . .

Papa, however, had changed her dream to the more practical one of a home and after Hope came, papa thought the back room, in which she had done a little china-painting, ought to be the nursery.

One day, not very long ago now (Gwendolyn and Wilhelmina were married, of course, and Hope had begun to go to town to study music), she had discovered the old paints. That evening she had said to papa, apropos of nothing at the moment: "Now that the girls are all taken care of, I think I'll go to town to an art school once or twice a week. I think I'd like to—join a life class—" She watched him narrowly.

"Art school? Life class! Isn't that where they paint naked men and women? Nothing like that, dear!" He had patted her with a protecting hand.

She did bring the old paints down from the attic, though, and hid them out in a playhouse in the yard. And she bought some canvas, and. . . .

And now, here, on Saturday night, at the family supper-party, was still another dream, kicking inside her . . . bring-

ing back memories of her third pregnancy, when she had hoped and hoped it would be a boy. Strangely enough, papa's pretty names were exhausted. With what queer, ironical twist had she named the baby "Hope"!

"For your mother, papa." The one who baked the beans. "Such a simple, New Englandy name."

"All right, mamma—your turn this time."

Her turn this time. . . .

Yes, it was Saturday night. And they were all there, sitting about the table—Gwen and her husband, Willie and her husband, Hope, papa, and, at papa's right, a guest of honor.

A momentous occasion. For this Miss Fabyan was a concert-singer of some note, Hope's music-teacher.

To be sure, there was another guest. That efficiency expert of papa's, whom he had invited once or twice before. "Thought he looked as if he needed something nourishing, mamma. Eats around in restaurants." Dear old papa and his open-faced ruse to get a beau for Hope! As if he could manage with her as he had with Gwen and Willie! As if it were not mamma's turn now!

"How are you enjoying Milltown?" she said to the young man beside her.

"I don't think much about enjoyment, Mrs. Bascom. I'm just here to make good. If you want to do that, you've got to go after what you've set yourself to do—" Her eyes just glanced at his heavy, square face . . . then on to Hope, sitting between Willie's husband and the guest of honor.

There was a scratching at the back of mamma's throat. Hope, usually phlegmatic, too sallow, overgrown—was tonight alert, flushed, actually pretty.

And then she looked at papa and the guest of honor and smiled.

Papa did not beam that way, unless he was talking to a pretty, clever woman.

And yet how mamma herself would love to be talking to Miss Fabyan about New York studios, music lions, Greenwich Village!

Yesterday morning the letter had come from Miss Fabyan to mamma which had started this much more poignant dream than any she had ever had for herself:

"I am starting next month for a year's study abroad. Would you and Mr. Bascom consider letting me take Hope with me? I dislike relinquishing her as my pupil. She has the physique, temperament, and voice to make a concert-singer. I am writing you this before I talk it over with her. May I see you and talk it over with you? Perhaps you would let her join me later."

Would not she, mamma, walk the whole twenty miles to the city if necessary to talk over such a plan? But she knew, as her heart clanged within her, that it was papa whom Miss Fabyan must convince. And so she had telephoned to the city. Would Miss Fabyan come out and meet Mr. Bascom?

She would. And here she was.

No, it was not at all like an ordinary Saturday-night supper.

Mamma had been quite breathless yesterday morning when she had given the orders to Dorset. "Now, for to-morrow night, Dorset—beef fillets, I think—"

"But the beans. You know it'll be Saturday, ma'am!"

"Dinner, not supper, to-morrow night, Dorset." Mamma's order tripped out on the very shortest of breaths.

"But Mr. Bascom, ma'am! He may want—"

Mamma flushed. "We are having a distinguished guest, Dorset. And we don't want beans." Mamma held her head high on her short neck and made as stately an exit as a dumpy lady can make into the sun-parlor, bearing the watering-pot.

"Very well, ma'am. But I'll tell cook to bake them. Mr. Bascom can have them for his Sunday-morning breakfast." Dorset, a detestable creature, whose last words had a victorious timbre!

The water, gushing forth from the watering-pot, moistened the cracked earth in the tub of English ivy, which seemed to stretch and live. Ivy, mamma, herself . . . a plant of natural abandon, but trained, tendril by tendril, to cling and

cover each square of the trellis of wifehood and motherhood!

"You don't hate me for being late for breakfast? Did papa scold?" A kiss was planted on the back corner of her cheek by Hope.

"No, dear. He didn't scold. He did ask about the party—did you have a good time?" Little weights on her words held down her own exuberance . . . about the letter, the telephone message.

"No, I didn't have a good time, mamma." She flung herself on the lounge. "I'm glad I didn't have to see papa. He always asks, and looks so—hurt—"

Why was mamma's heart thumping so triumphantly?

"Boys don't like me, mamma. I wish I could make them—comfortable. The way Gwen and Willie always could! But they talk so silly, and I haven't any—line—"

"Why do you worry, dear? Haven't you—other things? Isn't there something you can do that they can't—Gwen and Willie, I mean?"

"You mean my music?"

And mamma's exuberance slowly rose, lifting weights and all. This aloofness of her youngest daughter, this space between her and her sisters was sacred ground which mamma guarded and cherished. "You do love your music, don't you, dear?"

"Of course I love it. And Miss Fabyan, too. Curses! I wish she wasn't going away."

"Listen, Hope." Prudence, diplomacy were forgotten. "You can sing! Miss Fabyan has written me so."

"She told you I—can—sing?" She stretched long, not ungraceful arms across a pillow. "I know I can. I—love to sing." And to mamma an artist seemed straightway to have emerged from an overgrown weed. "I wish I could go abroad with her and study—"

Mamma turned around and finished watering the plants. She told Hope only that she had invited Miss Fabyan to *dinner* to-morrow night—at which Hope sat up, her eyes shining—just as they were shining here at the table at "to-morrow night" come true. "She's a darling, mamma. But

don't forget to ask her to smoke—and papa'd better fix her a drink when he mixes one for himself and the boys—"

"You know, dear, what he thinks about women—who do those things—"

"And you know what he'll think of turning Saturday-night supper into a dinner!" Accomplices, they, plotting against papa!

"I'll manage papa, dear!"

But Hope's face had suddenly sobered. "Papa doesn't like me—as much as he does Gwen and Willie. He wishes I were more like them—"

"Papa likes you—just the way you are. And he'll be so proud—" Starting to pin up a tendril of the vine, she stopped. It should wander at will. And she stood looking out across the wide lawn. Down in the corner, fronting the other street, was the playhouse.

She had let papa think she used it for garden-tools, old furniture, other innocuous diversions—never saying her play-things were paints, canvas. How he would joke about it! His favorite joke had always been, "You didn't know mamma thought she was an artist once? But she soon turned the studio into a nursery! She's had her career though, painted that fruit-dish with the strawberries on it—"

Mamma came back to earth . . . back to the dinner. She was actually hearing the very words.

They had all stopped to listen.

"You didn't know, Miss Fabyan, that my wife was once an artist—painted that fruit-dish. But the strawberries we have at Bascom's market have a richer flavor."

Mamma looked at Hope, who sat there transfigured by a new radiance . . . because she knew she could do something which Gwen and Willie could not do. Mamma no longer saw the strawberries. She was seeing Hope on a concert-stage—hair severely coiffed, gown daringly low—standing in the curve of the piano, hands clasped before her breast, swaying slightly, leaning forward confidingly to her audience, bowing.

"Did Gwen tell you?" said Gwen's husband at mamma's left. "She saw the doctor to-day."

"No! What did he say?"

"He predicts this one's going to be a boy—counted the heart-beats or something— Says it'll come most any time."

"Gwen looks badly. I don't like those dark circles." Circles . . . vicious circles . . . a senseless round, this getting married, having babies . . . to grow up . . . about whom you worry for fear they won't get married . . . and have babies to grow up and get married. . . . Mamma reached for her glass of water. "They do say," she added caustically, "a son in time saves nine."

"Mamma, I've put you down for the fancy-table at the Community Fair." Willie did not bother enough about clothes, and was always running things—fairs, benefits.

"Don't put me in charge, dear." Fairs—horrid things. Vicious circles, again. Every one making useless things for some one to buy, then going and buying more useless things. . . .

"Of course you'll take charge, mamma. You've done it so often—"

Dorset entered from the pantry with the fillets, dainty with parsley garnishings. Mamma reached again for her glass of water.

"Mamma, what's this? Dorset, where are the beans? And I just telling Miss Fabyan—"

"You see, Mr. Bascom, you can't keep the old traditions. Your wife will have it dinner—like every one else."

"Admit that you are disappointed. Dorset, are there no beans?"

"Yes, sir, if you wish them, sir—"

"Serve them, by all means!"

And the fillets were handed over to the waitress by Dorset.

"We are naturally simple people, Miss Fabyan. My wife was just trying to put on a little style for you. Whereas, mamma, she would much rather have us in our regular form. Isn't that true, Miss Fabyan?"

She smilingly agreed. "Your husband has told me of your charming Saturday-night custom, Mrs. Bascom. I am saving room for the *pièce de résistance.*"

Back came Dorset with the beans.

"Now, lady, what do you think of that for a rich brown? Be sure and take a piece of the pork—"

Mamma, meanwhile, was taking her disappointment firmly in hand. After all, what mattered an upset in the menu when the coup itself was proving so successful! Her chagrin quickly melted into delight at the good time papa was having. A delightful person, Miss Fabyan! Verve—that's what she had. Hope would have it, too. She stood this very night on the threshold of poise, finish, charm . . . exempted from menus, fancy-tables.

Another spark of understanding darted between her and Hope.

They went back to the living-room for coffee, and papa passed the cigarettes to the boys—and to Miss Fabyan.

Mamma worked her way into the charmed region of the dainty smoke swirls.

"Another delightful reminder of New England, Mrs. Bascom." Miss Fabyan lifted her cigarette toward a picture over the fireplace.

"Oh—do you like that?" Mamma hated it. It was so obviously red cows in a green pasture. Too red, too green. And the three cows might be Gwen, Willie, Hope. The last cow, looking back, had a certain alertness in the eye.

"Don't you like that?" Papa, too, had crossed the room, drawn by the beacon of a lady's cigarette.

Mamma's mind went further. Cows being driven home . . . a slaughter-house . . . hunks of beef in papa's markets . . . papa rubbing his hands. . . .

"I was telling Mrs. Bascom it brings back old forgotten smells. Coming out to your home is like an April wind full of spring. I forget—in my sun-blighted studio—that there is still family life like this."

The lady was saying all the things papa loved so much to hear!

"But it's just because you have the other that you love this," gently interpolated mamma.

"We hope you'll come often. The latch-string is—" Papa had elbowed his way to a point of greater vantage. And mamma involuntarily stepped back, joined Gwen and Willie, smiling at the spell being bound about papa's heart.

"Look, mamma! He seems quite smitten." Willie was nudging her, motioning to the efficiency expert and Hope—whose pupils were big with dreaminess, whose lips were parted in a happy smile (she had a neat little mouth with quirks in the corners like papa's). "And Hope's forgotten to be bashful. She's almost pretty." But Willie didn't know that Hope was looking right over the shoulder of this young man at a concert-stage beyond. . . .

"Can't we have some music?" Mamma tried to say it casually, but it was a very important part of the coup. They had not heard. She said it again, more boldly.

"Yes, indeed!" Miss Fabyan left papa and went over to the piano. Her stiff brocade gown was as much a part of her as a dragon-fly's shell and wings. "Hope, you first. What will you sing, dear?" Her sensitive hands groped out a few tenuous chords.

"Nothing too classical," ordered papa. But mamma knew that Hope would sing the thing which would show papa most of all how much she had accomplished.

"That aria from the Mozart opera?" she asked, and forestalled any objection by placing the music on the rack before her. Two bright spots on her cheeks matched the shining of the eyes.

"Very well, dear," Miss Fabyan, smiling indulgently, ran off the introduction.

And Hope sang. It was a virtuoso's showpiece, a thing of glitter and vocal gymnastics, but Hope was as pleased with her performance as a child who can stand on his head.

Mamma's bosom rose and fell. Papa moved absently about, noisily scratched a match. The young man stood, expressionless, below the cows.

A cadenza, more lacy than all the others—a scale, showing

her full range—a trill, a turn, a clear, cold ringing high note —and Hope stepped blushing and smiling out of the piano-curve.

The young man started forward. "Oh, there must be an encore. One of the old ones: 'I Arise from Dreams of Thee.' Please!"

"There you are, Hope." Miss Fabyan was still at the piano. "You must give your audience what they want."

But Hope shook her head. "It's your turn now, Miss Fabyan."

"Well, dear, if you won't, I shall have to." Gently caressing fingers fondled the keyboard again. Then she tilted her chin, smiled directly at papa, and sang—oh, so piquantly— "Gin a Body," "Drink to Me Only," and "The Last Rose of Summer," with an artistry which affected effortless simplicity.

"Bully!" Papa hadn't taken a single puff on his cigar. "Teach my little girl songs like those!"

And mamma, though retaining her ponderous armchair, was lifted on the thinnest of silken clouds.

Only to be parachuted to earth! For the next event of the Saturday-night program was already on. "You play pool, don't you, Miss Fabyan?"

"I'm no kind of a player. You men go and have your game. I'd really like to talk to Mrs. Bascom." To the quickening beat of mamma's heart the men went out reluctantly, that is, papa and the efficiency expert, who turned at the door. "Aren't you coming, too?" he said to Hope—and the other girls.

"We might go and watch." Willie, like papa, always helped things along.

And they all went out.

"Now we can talk." Mamma sank down on the sofa, beckoning Miss Fabyan to the place beside her.

"About Hope!"

"Yes, about Hope." Mamma was a girl, slender, graceful, like her spirits. "Tell me what she ought to do. And what did papa, Mr. Bascom, say?"

"How do you feel, Mrs. Bascom, about your girl going in for a musical career?"

Mamma sat up and interlaced her fat fingers. "It is—freedom, Miss Fabyan, for her to give herself to the life-work of expressing herself." She might have been reciting the litany. "Freedom from petty exactions, freedom to grow. Oh, I know it may not mean success—" For she had caught an ambiguous expression on the other's face. "I don't care so much for that as just to know—she will have had the chance and tried her best. Oh, I only wish I were she—now—"

"If you were she, Mrs. Bascom, that is, if she had your consecration, I'd promise she would make a singer. Maybe at Hope's age you did not feel all this." The tenderness in her voice changed quickly to businesslike alertness. "She has the physique and voice. The rest is up to her. I know now I can't say anything to urge. I can't even tell her of the reward. Only of the other things—discouragement, loneliness, injured feelings, distrust of her own ability, and sacrifice of all this security." She made a quick, inclusive gesture. "But if she wants it, in spite of all that— Well, as I said, it is up to her."

"My girl is not a coward," said mamma proudly. "But what did papa, Mr. Bascom, say?"

"Can't we walk out? It is such a lovely evening."

They went through a side-door on to the lawn. Mamma ran her arm through Miss Fabyan's. A lovely June evening, mellow with fragrances.

"Your husband is—rather a dear, Mrs. Bascom. Just a grown-up boy, isn't he? Like so many men. As I told him, it's a treat for me to come in on such a refreshing home scene. Things like that are so far, far behind for me."

"And did he say Hope could go abroad with you?"

"He didn't say." A few more steps on the velvety grass. "To tell you the truth, I didn't talk about Hope to him."

"You didn't talk—music, at the table?"

"No!" She gave a thrushlike, apologetic laugh. "We talked much more sensible things. Markets, cuts of meat,

farms and cows, home and—beans!" She sobered. "And yet, you wanted me for—a sort of missionary, didn't you?"

"Yes." There had come a quick back-washing of mamma's youth into its past, leaving her fifty-three years old.

"And now that I'm here, I can't do it!" said the other woman emphatically. "Don't you see, dear Mrs. Bascom? I come out here and see Hope so happy, and see, too, the security ahead for her, some one like that young man, home, children, perhaps—"

"Oh, but that's just what I—she doesn't want—"

"You understand, don't you? It isn't that Hope hasn't talent. I have been so proud to find her. It's just that she mustn't begin her rocky road by having me or you intercede with her father. If she wants it above everything—nothing he could say would stand in her way."

"Oh-h, Miss—Fabyan!" Papa was calling from the porch. "We need you! We're going to play Kelly pool!"

"Hadn't I better go back?" she asked.

"Very well! Papa does love games so!" Mamma dropped Miss Fabyan's arm, and walked on alone in the moonlight. The something alive in her had died.

No, no, it must only be asleep. As yet, no one had consulted Hope at all. And when she had sung to-night, she had looked so eager, so pretty— She, of course, had the will, the desire.

Skirting the shrubbery at the far side of the lawn, she had come up to the playhouse. She pushed open the door, went in and turned on the light. There was only an empty easel, a few discarded chairs, and a suspicious lump in the corner, covered with a cloth. She uncovered a pile of canvases.

Not strawberries! Different things . . . the sort of things she had thought people were painting to-day. The washwoman's little girl in a bright shawl, the fruit-vender's boy with his pushcart (both bribed to secrecy), a street scene enlarged from a little sketch and memory, an impression of the garden from the playhouse window. Crude splashes

of raw color. Gauche attempts to get effects. And all incoherent.

She arranged an exhibition of her unburied hopes on a row of chairs. They stood mocking her for her clumsy use of color, her ignorance of anatomy, her faulty composition.

When she had worked, how gay she had been, how callous to her limitations! Alive, burned by the flames of a rejuvenated heart!

The flames had burned out, leaving only dying cinders of doubt. Not even doubt, but certainty that they were all bad! She covered her face.

And yet, where Hope was concerned, there was still only anticipation. Her hands dropped and her head lifted. She must go and bring her here at once, to see this exhibition in all its mockery. It must fire her to achievement while there still was time.

She went back to the lawn.

A night of mystery and romance. And, as a fitting conclusion to the premises of June and moonlight, two figures walked toward her, arm in arm.

In a wild, inarticulate fear she stepped back into the shadow of the shrubbery. They passed close by, unheeding. Hope and the young man!

"Moonlight like this must make you want to sing—"

"Oh, it does!" Then came low, crooning, sweet:

"I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night."

Two voices instead of one; in close harmony. They sat down on a garden bench; in closer juxtaposition. One head instead of two. . . . The song ended in an unmistakable kiss.

Mamma fled across the lawn to the house, a culprit before the law of life. Shaken with running, and the humiliation of her defeat, she sank panting into a porch chair.

To a girl like Hope that kiss could be nothing less than the key to the secret garden of the matrimonially elect. With

a horrid sense of fatality she heard the key click in the lock. It was a prison, not a garden.

"I'm afraid, if you've got to make that train, we'll have to go right along." Papa's voice floated out from the hall. "There's no knowing where mamma's wandered—" She crouched in her corner, incapable of getting up and going through the conventions of adieus.

Not until she heard the whir of wheels on the drive did she enter the house—the placid, composed, eternal mamma.

"Was that Miss Fabyan who just drove away? How remiss of me—I just walked out—"

The girls and their husbands were also getting ready to leave.

"It is rather a joke, mamma, papa having to do the honors to your distinguished guest," said Willie.

Mamma crossed over to Gwen, started to help her with her wrap. A frightened look in Gwen's eyes plunged her mother-heart back in its customary mold. "Darling," she whispered, kissing her. "Only a few days more, and it will all be over." She could only remember how terribly ill Gwen had been when the last baby came.

"This is the last time—ever!" Gwen whispered, and bit her lip.

Raucous laughter came from the two boys, who were matching pennies to see who would go to the garage for the car.

"My girl isn't a coward!" said mamma, and at Gwen's kiss her heart, such a little while ago empty, filled with old floods of tenderness.

"Miss Fabyan—has she gone?" Hope and the young man came in. "I hadn't any idea it was so late!" The two bright spots on Hope's cheeks were flaming magenta.

The young man said good night to mamma. "You don't know how much I appreciate coming to your home, Mrs. Bascom. I've never had one—"

Gwen's husband had already drawn up with the car. "Good night, mamma," he called. "Tell papa not to forget that bottle of champagne. We may want it in a day or

two—" The rest were piling in. "Good night, mamma!" They were all gone.

Except mamma and Hope! And Hope said nothing.

Mamma rearranged the articles on the hall-stand, hoping her girl would speak, tell her, her own mother—

"I don't believe I'll wait to tell papa good night. I'm awfully sleepy." Hope started up the stairs. She wanted to run after her, cry out: "Tell mamma, dear! She's been through it, she knows—"

She went into the living-room and sat down. It all came back . . . papa, the effervescent lover, looking down his own rosy road to achievement and prosperity which he insisted she must take with him, refusing even to see the sweet-smelling, secluded wood-path, down which she was loving to wander alone. She saw again that hurt look when she hesitated— "Why, I thought—it never occurred to me you wouldn't want—" And then the only thing she had wanted was to see the quirks come back again into the corners of his mouth. It hurt to see him disappointed then, and at every other time since— And now Hope was choosing to sing the old songs with the young man who had "never had a home," rather than arias on a concert-stage alone.

"Well, mamma, so they've all gone!" Papa came in, rubbing his hands, and sat down beside her. "Nice woman, that Miss Fabyan!"

"Yes, dear, I knew you liked her. You don't generally see our guests to the station."

"It's a pity she—drinks and smokes, though—"

Mamma wanted to cry out: "Oh, no, you don't mean that—"

"I do like to see women dainty, feminine, different from men—" And then: "I wonder why she never got married."

"Of course there are alternatives—"

"You don't really think that! Come here and sit on my lap, the way you used to. Gettin' a leetle heavy, dearie! As I was saying, I'm thankful our girls aren't that sort—who want to go out—after things. I'm satisfied with nice, wholesome girls."

Mamma smoothed the five hairs across papa's bald spot.

Papa sat up. "Mamma!" She nearly toppled from his knee. "There, I guess you'd better get up. You are heavy, and I feel a little pain— That supper—"

"Those beans, dear. You know you ought not to—"

"Mamma! Hope! You don't think she wants to do anything—like singing in public?"

"No, dear, I don't!"

"Well, I'm thankful. I'll admit I've been a little troubled about her, so shy, and not quite so pretty as the others—I don't mind telling you, mamma"—his voice lowered—"that's why I asked that young man here again to-night. He's shy, too. When he inquired for her to-day, I thought I'd strike while the iron was hot. Nice fellow, mamma, clean, capable, goes after his job—"

Mamma sat gazing at the cows. The one turning back was as bovine as the others.

"A young man who's never had a home will appreciate it when he gets it, mamma. We'd better—ask him here once in a while—"

Papa was on his feet, pacing the rug now. "Well, if they —should fix it up, you and I'll be here alone. We're getting on, mamma—all our birds flown—" He stopped, placed his hand at the pit of his stomach.

"What is it, papa? That indigestion again?"

"Just a touch. I'll take some bicarbonate when we go up. As I was saying, we're getting on. I took out another fifty thousand of insurance last week, mamma. Want to be sure you and the girls can keep things up when I'm gone."

"There, there, papa! I can't bear such gloomy subjects, and I don't like that pain, dear. They say there's no such thing as indigestion. It's pressure on the heart, or— I'd better run right up and get that soda."

When mamma came back, papa still stood there—pompous, triumphant, his feet apart. Mamma recalled reading somewhere that most of the world's great men had been of short and thick-set stature. Papa rubbed his hands. "We've got a lot to be thankful for, mamma. Three nice girls, two,

almost three, nice sons-in-law. One, two, three, four, almost five grandchildren— We're certainly doing our share."

Mamma carefully measured a teaspoonful of soda.

"I've just had an idea, mamma. If there should be anything between Hope and this young man—mind you, I say 'if'—of course, you can't push things like that—I'm going to pull down that old playhouse and put them up an English cottage right here on the grounds. We'd be lonesome, don't you think, without one of 'em close at hand?"

Mamma stirred the soda in the water thoroughly. Round and round the spoon went in circles. Engagement luncheon . . . trousseau . . . wedding . . . settling the new home . . . layette . . . baby. . . . Multitudinous details buried dreams forever this time.

"Drink this, papa. I really think, dear, you ought to give up eating beans."

Papa drank.

"It isn't the beans, mamma. They never hurt any one. It's the mixture—all those other rich things. After this, no matter who comes, we'll have just beans and brown bread on Saturday nights. Be sure and tell Dorset, mamma."

"Very well, dear," said mamma.

A JAPANESE KIMONO*

By MOSES BRAGIN

JAPAN is a country from where the kimono came. Japan, they say, is in the corner of the world."

"Yes, near Siberia."

"This Japanese kimono was a present to me."

"On a birthday?"

"No, my dear little one. This is how it happened."

As the gray-headed woman in the coat bent forward, she looked sadly at the younger woman with the silk parasol. She had to raise her voice again, for the beach was getting more crowded and the open café where they were seated was overflowing with busy bathers and waiters.

"My youngest son is a doctor and he took me to this Japanese doctor who looks like a real Jew only his eyes are different and I said to him he looks like a Jew and he laughed and made a big joke about his eyes. They have a name for it in English but I have forgotten—everything sticks to me now like a bean to an old wall."

She thought for a while and added more wrinkles to a face that looked as though it had been bound with many strings. She picked up a man's sock in her lap and looked inside it, and then she continued.

"Maybe you, a Jewish mother, will ask why doesn't a son, a doctor, attend his mother. My son was going to be a specialist also and he was sharp as two knives but when one gets married to a raisin like that, to the only daughter of right allrightnickis, the head and the heart become more like a club."

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The woman with the silk parasol nodded her head sadly.

"Nu, in short, we went to this Japanese specialist and he finds like tears were in my blood and I always feel cold like I was in Siberia. He saved me. Let only my worst enemies have the pains I had—like big knives in me until I was thin like a broken stick. There I first saw a pretty Japanese kimono. He gave me one to put on when he heard my heart and it was softer than feathers from a goose's belly and I told him that it made me feel like a salve was on my body and he said it was a Japanese kimono."

"So he gave it to you for a present?"

"No, no, my dear little one. But next time when I came he showed me a box with silk paper and silver cords and another kimono in it—different from the old one like day from night. My son took it and gave it to me and I stood like a golem until he said it was a present from his deep heart to me. He didn't charge me a penny for all the visits and the pills and all my sighs and groans and then he gives me this Japanese kimono which his mother sent him for me from Japan near Siberia."

"He must be a fine man, a good Christian."

"A golden soul, my dear little one, a Christian but a sweet man, a real silken young man. A son like that carries his mother in his arms and kisses her feet. I can remember it like to-day when he stretched the box out and my son took it and gave it to me."

She closed her eyes and swayed in her seat.

The open café had, meanwhile, become even noisier. A fat waiter, who had paused for a moment near their table, ran back to the counter holding on to his belly.

He began guffawing. "The old thing's still batting about her rag. She's got a new customer now—the one with that there parasol."

"Ain't that rich 's gravy?" shrilled another waiter while the counterman roared himself red as a lobster.

The old woman heard, winced and huddled up more. "It is so hard to forget," she murmured in her cracked voice. "It was from the finest silks with a moon and a sun on it

and birds with tails long as my arm to fill the best pillows and featherbeds. But the silk was so fine and it melted in your hands and slipped out."

"It must be a very beautiful kimono, very beautiful," her companion said.

"More beautiful than gold, my dear little one. They say Japanese kimonos are so wonderful like no other kimonos in the whole world from corner to corner. They are so beautiful that the Japanese women, the richest beautiful women go around through the streets in these kimonos. With no other thing on."

"I would like to see such a kimono. It must be one in a thousand."

"Yes, to my dying day I will not see such a kimono. One day when I was home all alone, I took it out and put it on. I had an old bathrobe my son once gave me and it was old and he made me throw it out when he gave me the Japanese kimono. It was so beautiful I couldn't wear it more than a few seconds and my heart said to me it would be a shame and a sin to wear such a beautiful thing then. When I put it on I stood near the looking glass and I looked and looked and I looked like a Czarina, like a princess. It was a light to my eyes. So one morning when I had the time I took it to a store in New York on Fifth Avenue and do you know how much the salesman said it cost?"

"How much?"

"He asked me where I got it. I didn't steal it, I said. He looked at my old coat and he thought I stole it. The big horse. 'How much does it cost?' I said. He said it costs more than fifty dollars."

She stopped talking and looked across the table.

"So, so much for a kimono," the woman with the parasol cried.

"Don't forget, my dear little one, it was a Japanese kimono. A Japanese kimono is not a plaything."

"But even fifty dollars for a kimono is a whole fortune."

"The big horse said it cost a little more than fifty dollars. Go and believe him. I saw through his tricks, the big horse.

He wanted to buy it from me. The kimono costs more than a hundred dollars. I was not born yesterday."

"He saw you were old and so he wanted to make business with you."

"I gave him what he'll remember until his dying day, the big, big horse. . . ."

She shivered and looked around her. The waiters hurried with their trays or mopped their red faces. The stretch of sand in front of the café was littered with men, women and children, umbrellas, chairs and clothing.

She shivered in her coat and repeated, "It was beautiful as gold and smelled like flowers."

"I can see it was beautiful as the world," said the younger woman. She let her parasol slip between her legs and wiped her face. "It—what kind of colors did it have?"

"My dear little one, it has colors from the ends of the world. It has so many different strange colors that who can remember them all when things stick to me now like—like a bean to an old wall. First at night it had one color and in the daytime it had another color. There were hills of snow and a red sun and a moon white as my mother's milk. And there were big birds on the sleeves. And the sleeves, my dear little one, were so big you can put the arms of a dozen young Christian women through them and the skirt was so long, a verst almost. . . . The truth is you need a servant only to walk behind you to hold it up. You can see it was not made first for a little poor old Jewess like me or even somebody like you."

"Yes," the younger woman said, "yes, a plain dress is all we need. Let the young bother their pretty heads over evening dresses and such foolishness."

"But it was such a kimono, such a kimono. Such a kimono you could wear to a wedding or a ball and so I never wore it more than a few minutes and then my heart would tell me to put it away. I kept it locked in the closet where my daughter Yetta used to keep her fur coat. Then my two youngest daughters, Yetta and Sarah, still lived with me. Now Yetta lives in California where they say oranges grow

in the streets. Her husband has a big store there and Sarah lives in the hospital where she is a nurse over other nurses. I used to get up early in the morning to make breakfast for them. How could I wear the kimono and dirty it?"

"Yes, you are right. When you have children you must work for them. By the stove in the kitchen, near the sink you could tear it soon and then it doesn't last from Esther's Fast to Purim."

"Yes, my dear little one, I remember it like it was to-day. Night after night I dream about it until I have to get up from bed and walk and walk like when I had birthpains. I saved it in my old age to sit quiet like a queen and enjoy a piece of life. Enough being a horse. I saved it but for whom, tell me for whom."

She looked across the table with a twisted face.

Her friend shook her head sadly and wiped her face again. In back of her the counterman suddenly brayed and the shrill waiter stuck his nose into his rag and giggled. "That's old, old 's pie."

The old woman shivered and went on quickly.

"When I remember how he came to take it away from me, it is bitter, it is bitter as worm cabbage. First he gave it to me. He said, 'Here, mamele, dear little heart, take it and wear it until a hundred and twenty years.' Then he goes and takes it away."

"Ei, that isn't right, that isn't right even from a mamma."

"Nu, so now you see how it was. The Japanese doctor gave the kimono to my son, my son says, and then my son gave it to me for a present," she said with a catch in her voice.

"Why did he come to take it? A son shouldn't treat his only mamma that way."

"I—I remember it like the taste of worm cabbage. It was a day in summer like this but it was in the morning. Then I didn't have to live near the sea. I was cured from my sickness, and I was no more a broken stick. You could take my flesh in your hand like an apple. I had a little candy stand and in back was my room. Do you think I

had to work? The good God knows no. But I didn't want to take from the children while I had strength. Children can take from a mamma until the pail runs over but not a mamma from children. So he came to see me and took it, my son took it, and that—that was bitterer than worm cabbage."

"A shame and a sin. What one gives for a present one doesn't take away."

"He was married already to her. She, she is the only daughter of rich people who eat honey cake like we eat bread, allrightnickis. They wanted me to live with them after. No, not with them, even if God would flay me, I said. And so one day they came in an automobile and I showed her the kimono. Next day he came for it flying like a bird."

The shrill waiter just then dashed up to their table and grabbed a bowl of sugar and ran laughing and spilling it all over her coat.

She shook herself and winced.

"Nu, what did you say, you, his old mother?"

The old mother stopped making small worms from the crumbs of bread on the table. She swallowed and blinked.

At last she said, "Tell me, my dear little soul, what could I say. He said to me, 'Mamele, you are not using it and you're leaving it for the moths to make banquets on it. I'll get you something just as nice to wear.' So he took it with its sleeves and its long skirt and all the birds and flowers and the sun and the moon. After that I began to feel how old I was. I remembered my Yankel how he died and I was left all alone with six children. I began crying and my blood became worse. And now the best doctor can't help me at all."

She finished with a shiver and pulled the sock over her hand like a glove. She watched her friend wipe the sweat off her face. After brooding for a short while, she went on:

"I remembered the day Yankel was killed by a car and the company was so good and gave me a little money to bury him deep, deep in the earth. I was left all alone and

poor as a stone with six little children, little crumbs. I opened a candy store and worked and worked. I sent the children through school, the girls didn't stick a finger into cold water, and he became a doctor. It is bitter like worm cabbage."

"The best son," the woman with the parasol said, "will take from his mamma to give to his wife. Put a mamma on a clean plate and his wife on a dirty plate and the best son will go to his wife. It seems God wants it that way."

"My son is not a bad son, but he is a son like other sons. Once I went to see him and his wife. They live in a big house like a palace. And in the morning she—she walked around in it and smoked her cigarettes and the ashes fell all over it like from a nose. In the Japanese kimono. Like a real lady, like a Czarina in the Japanese kimono."

"Ach, you must have felt terrible."

"Foolish goat that she was. Who asks you to show it to me? It— I took my hat and coat and went home quick. My son ran out after me into the street. 'What is the matter with you, mamele?' I said, 'Nothing, nothing, go back to your wife.' He tries to be good to me. He sends me checks but I never use them. With the others it is a different story."

She breathed deeply and then mumbled to herself, "Bitterest—to give and then take away like a gypsy. And she—she thinks she is a raisin, God's raisin in the world."

Her friend asked, "And what did the other children say?"

"Only Sarah was home then. She is a good child but she, too, has the brain of a goat. The others are sowed and spread all over the country. I can live by myself and remember my Yankel. Enough to be crazy about children, enough. . . ."

She looked out over the beach, littered with bathers fresh from the sea, wet and salty as herring. One mother lay in the sand and let her baby tear at her hair and face. Another, a fat hen of a woman, put bits of grit into her mouth to make her little girl laugh. A third flew from under a huge umbrella to her fallen child. The child was not frightened and was not crying.

"Ooh, Seymour fall and hurt hisself."

Seymour creased his face.

"Poor darling, Seymour hurt hisself bad."

He began to gasp.

She hugged him hard and stamped on the sand. "Bad, bad sand."

Then Seymour began squalling as though nothing in the world would ever be able to stop him.

The old woman winced and turned away. "Foolish goat, sell yourself neck and shoulder to those pretty toys, sell yourself."

She looked across the table. "It is best to be alone with your husband. I have a room now not far from here, a few blocks, and a friend comes to see me once in seven years. It is a nice room and it is cheap and I have my money from the stand I sold. Only it is over a hall where they dance. All night you hear singing and shouting and drinking and noise from the painted goats with the dirt they pick up in the streets."

"It is not a Garden of Eden you have in your old age."

"It can be worse. I do a little sewing—men's socks I wear under my stockings. I feel always so cold. I read a newspaper and I write a letter to California or to some of the other children. I sit here and talk to some Jewish little heart like you. I have such a bitterness everywhere in my body like I was a chicken you open for the Sabbath and break its gall. . . ."

She looked around and then put out her hand and tapped on the table.

"I go looking through the stores when I am not tired. I look for kimonos. You hear, I haven't found one that is like my Japanese kimono. Last week I went all alone to New York to Fifth Avenue and I came home a dead one. As I was talking to a saleslady, a nice Jewish daughter, the whole world turned around like a cook spoon was mixing it. When I woke up, people were around me like flies, and I came home more like a dead one, and after I had a

doctor and he said I shouldn't go to New York again at all. No more the old horse's strength."

She laughed a hollow bitter laugh.

Her friend almost rose from her seat. Her parasol slipped to her feet. "You shouldn't go then. You must take care of yourself and let your son the doctor take care of you."

"I—I will eat pig first than bother him. But, do you hear I have not been able to find one like it, like it like two drops of water."

"Yes, yes, one can see you had a wonderful thing."

"My dear little one, but how can one forget? The Japanese doctor gave it to my son and he gave it to me and then he takes it like—like a gypsy. Then she, God's raisin—nu, it is even bitterer than worm cabbage to remember this part. And it—it was for a Czarina with a long skirt a servant had to hold up and there were different kinds of flowers and birds and trees on it like a field in the old home and—"

She was interrupted by an old man with glasses and a young man who pushed to their table.

"Hello, ma," the young man said to the younger woman.

She rose stiffly. "This is my husband and my married son."

The old woman looked at her with a pleading face. "You are not going so soon."

"It is getting late. Nu, good-by and take care of your health."

"A good year, a good year."

As they were crossing the café, they met the fat waiter carrying a plate of soup. The young man was saying, "Yes, ma, Lilly met her, too. She sits around here always talking about a nightgown or something."

The fat waiter doubled up and blurted, "Nightgown—no, wooden kimono."

He began to act as though he were on a rolling ship. Suddenly his soup slid off the tray and splattered on the floor. He bent over and with his open mouth looked as though he had just been seasick. The shrill waiter ran up,

dishes clattered, people laughed, and slowly it became darker and darker.

The old woman sat at her deserted table under a side light and shivered as she kneaded crumbs of bread into little worms. The counter closed and the waiters left one by one. She wet her fingers and picked up the worms and put them into her mouth one by one. When the moon came up she got up with a bitter expression and walked unsteadily towards the last table.

There was a sudden scraping behind her. She held on to a post and finally saw somebody creep from under her table.

"It's nothing," a young man said, coming towards her. "It's the parasol I gave my mother and she left it when she was talking to you."

She stared at him and finally seemed to awake. "Ei, ei, a memory like a pit once and now nothing sticks—like a bean to an old wall. And your dear little mother, will she be here to-morrow?"

"No, I don't think so. She's going to New York. Well, good night."

He left her talking to herself eagerly.

"In New York maybe I will meet her and show her there are no such kimonos at all now."

She crept out on the sand where she could see the surf carrying on its tongue drops of milk from the old moon. Then a cloud came up and hid the moon.

"Nu, to-morrow is another day and it will pass so quick in New York where there are stores and one can look."

She turned to the north where the lights of New York were burning. Shivering, she crept off in that direction and was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

THE UNHOLY MARTYR *

By JANE CROSBY

JOHN WEST touched the long official envelope that lay in his vest pocket. He liked to know it was there. Those folded typewritten sheets with the heading "International Society of Engineers," stirred him more than anything that had happened in the last fifteen years. It was the kind of letter that quickened one's pulse, even at forty-five. It meant honor and achievement, that letter. He thought of the men who would be there at the conference in London, big clever men from all over the world. He thought of the pleasure it would be to talk with them, to learn how projects were handled in South America, China. He didn't know much about foreign countries, except what he got from reading.

He smiled a little. Perhaps his idea of London was still colored by Dickens and Thackeray. It would be pleasant to find the Old Curiosity Shop and Gaunt House. Afterwards perhaps he and Martha would see something of the English country, would feel the wind on the downs, before they came back.

Just for a minute he felt afraid. What if Martha objected to this, too—said it was impossible. She might—she'd objected to so many things—on account of Zoe; and of course it would be hard for her, leaving Zoe. Only this was different. It wasn't like foregoing a trip to the seashore or an evening at the theater. It was such a *big* thing. Then the wonder of it slid over him. Why, Martha would see it—surely. She'd see that this was different from those other

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things that hadn't mattered so much. He hadn't been away from Buffalo, except for short business trips to New York, in ten or twelve years.

He thought of the responsiveness that would leap into Zoe's eyes when he told her about it. It was so nice to tell Zoe things. As he passed a flower shop he stopped and bought some pink roses. He'd miss Zoe. He'd miss her a lot, but he would bring England back to her just as he brought flowers for her tray. He was not imaginative about flowers but he liked to think of Zoe having them near her.

They'd see that Zoe was very comfortable while they were away. They'd get that nice Miss Stanley, who had taken care of her the last time she had been in the hospital, and he'd have Dr. Reynolds come in every few days to see her. Afterwards he would tell her about everything. He'd take his camera along and snap pictures to show her. They'd talk about them in the long winter evenings. Talking about it, sharing it with Zoe, would be nicer than anything else.

And Martha—it would be good for her to get away from housekeeping and things like that for a while. Martha had talked for years about getting away, only she was too unselfish to go and leave Zoe. He got a little tired of that quality that came into her voice, though, when she talked about it—that sort of self-commiserating endurance. Once he had come into the room suddenly, and had heard Martha discussing the fact that she could never go away and leave Zoe, and he had felt for a minute like a stranger, unrelated to Martha. That quality—the conscious martyrdom of it—appalled him. He thought that some one else coming in as he did would have got the impression that Martha was the one who suffered, that she was the one who couldn't walk. It was strange, an impression like that—how it stuck in your consciousness. But he would arrange it all for Martha this time. She would understand what this opportunity meant to him and be glad to go. Of course she would, when she realized.

Walking up the steps of the old Delaware Avenue house, John whistled. As he'd never been able to carry a tune,

the whistle was rather mixed and inharmonious, but it sounded gay.

He found Martha in the dining room. She was arranging Zoe's tray. She looked more tired than usual, he decided. Her skin was pinched, and about her mouth it was drawn tight. He was glad she would have this chance to get away. Perhaps London would take that harassed look out of her eyes.

John kissed her hurriedly—because Martha was always so busy that he had to kiss her while she was doing something else. He laid down the roses.

She looked at them hastily, already intent on securing a vase.

"I'm glad you brought them, John," she said in a thin voice; "Zoe had an attack this afternoon."

"Was it bad?"

"Not awfully severe. She's resting easily now. We helped to make her comfortable—Lucy and I. Of course Monday is our busiest day, but that couldn't be helped. It put Lucy back in her work, and I had a report to get ready for the Foreign Missions Committee—but it's all right."

"I'm sorry," John said simply. It did seem that Martha had a hard time. Then he thought of the conference. His eyes brightened. "There's something I want to tell you—it's a wonderful surprise."

"Well, wait till after dinner, John. I have to get this up to Zoe now and. . . ."

"Let me take it," he said quickly.

"Oh, no, you're a little awkward. I can manage it better."

He felt baffled. It was hard to help Martha, and he wanted so much to help her. She made one's offers seem blundering and absurd, somehow.

But John enjoyed the excellent dinner in spite of Martha's constant directions to Lucy in regard to the table service. She insisted on perfection, and it was difficult for Lucy, he knew. He wished that Martha would have another servant. Lucy could not be in the dining room and in the

kitchen at once; the house was fairly large, and with things to do for Zoe. . . . He could afford it, too. They lived so quietly that he was surprised at how much they were able to save. Martha was thrifty, he appreciated that. Fifteen years ago, before he was a member of the firm, her thrift served him well; but now he wished she would spend more —he'd like to see that twisted look gone from her mouth, and those little slanting lines from the corners of her eyes.

"Well," he said, over the dessert, "shall I tell you?"

"Finish your pie first, John, and we'll go into the living room. Then it won't keep Lucy back with the dishes."

"All right," he said agreeably. Again he had that feeling that he was a little boy.

"I can tell you now," John smiled, in the living room. "Sit here, Martha, and be comfortable."

"Oh, this is all right. What is it? I have to go to a foreign-missions meeting in a few minutes. You won't mind staying with Zoe, will you? I would, but I have to go to this meeting." She sighed a little.

"No, of course I don't, Martha." His voice dropped with the wonder of what he was going to say. "Martha, I've been appointed a delegate to the International Society of Engineers' conference in London!"

"Well, that's a fine honor to have, anyway."

She looked surprised, but he didn't see any of that quick delight that he had got used to looking for in Zoe. It was strange the way some faces leaped with delight while others stayed stony.

"Yes; and you know, it's the pleasure of it I'm thinking of as much as the honor part of it. Of course it's the biggest thing that ever happened to me. I guess it's the biggest thing that ever could happen to me. I never expected it, but you know, Martha, I've been thinking more about the fun we'll have, seeing London and a little of the English country maybe. I've always wanted to go to Devon, where my father's family came from. And the trip—it will put some color into your cheeks, Martha." He reached for her hand.

She drew away. "But, John, how could you ever think of it? You know we can't go. I haven't left Zoe for sixteen years—ever since we knew she could never walk again, and I certainly can't leave her any more now. I can't understand how you could even think of it, John. Of course, if one had no cares and responsibilities it would be very nice, but when one has them one has to give up pleasures and trips to Europe. I should think you'd know all I've given up taking care of Zoe. She's my sister, of course, and it's all right, but it's pretty hard on me. You wouldn't go by yourself and leave me to bear it all alone, would you?" Her voice was sharp with the preposterousness of such an event.

"No," he said slowly, "I thought of our going together. I thought we could get Miss Stanley to take care of Zoe. I wish you'd have a nurse all the time, anyway, Martha. And I'd get Dr. Reynolds to drop in every day or two."

"Do you know what that would cost, John? It would be absolutely prohibitive."

"I can manage that all right, Martha. I've been able to save a good deal—you're a good wife—and I'd be so glad to do it for us both." His voice faltered a little. Martha didn't seem to realize the wonder of the thing. Maybe he hadn't explained it properly.

"I'd never think of it," Martha said crisply. "The idea of leaving my poor sister to a nurse. What would people say?"

"Well, I feel Zoe would want us to go, Martha. Let's put it up to her. And if she does, why what difference does it make? If Zoe's willing, that's all that matters. That's the only thing I hesitated about—I don't like to leave her either, but I'm pretty sure Zoe would want us to go. She always does want us to do things."

"Zoe is absurd, like all invalids," Martha said, rising. "You can ask her, of course, but I would not consider it. I have to go to the meeting now."

John did not say anything. After all, there wasn't anything to say when you gave up something you wanted

terribly. You just forgot about it as quickly as you could, and hoped the ache of wanting it wouldn't come at you too often, wouldn't leap at you out of quiet moments on the street and in bed. During the fifteen years that he had been married, John had given up so many things that the process had become almost automatic. He walked a little heavily as he went up the stairs to Zoe's room. Anyway, he would tell Zoe about his appointment.

The pleasure of telling Zoe things was vivid. It was like taking a little girl to the circus and watching the delight in her eyes, discovering again that a merry-go-round was an enchanted vehicle. Zoe had that marvelous quality of giving radiance to things. In spite of her fragility, her vitality was amazing. John wondered whether it was her unnaturally bright eyes—bright with pain, often—or her sweet husky voice, which gave a new freshness to living, to things which were less beautiful before she touched them. That zest she had for life—when her living was a succession of days in a chair by the window, turning the pages of a book, talking quietly with a friend, looking at the petals of a flower.

The door of her room was open, and the faint scent that always clung to her assailed him. Zoe was lying on a large black chaise longue with a soft pink blanket across her knees. The light fell on her gently, leaving part of her face and body in shadow, making the rest of her startlingly lovely.

"You look like a picture," John said softly.

Zoe smiled that faint smile of hers, which was sometimes a little mocking and sometimes quite breathlessly radiant.

"I liked the roses, John. Thank you for them."

"Feeling better, Zoe?"

"Oh, yes." Lying there, she looked incredibly young—like a little girl, almost, who had decided to lie down for a while. The dark hair, curling a little damply on her forehead, the heightened color over the cheek-bones, and the

too-bright eyes were the only indications that she had had a recent struggle with pain.

"Read this," he said, giving her the letter. He sat down near the chaise longue, where he could watch her face. He wanted to see the light and wonder come. Zoe read quickly.

"John, how wonderful!" she said excitedly; "I'm so glad for you. I'm so glad." He leaned over and she touched his hand. "When will you go? You ought to be in London by the first of June, shouldn't you?"

"I knew you'd be pleased," he spoke happily. "Coming home I thought about how much I'd enjoy telling you."

"I can hardly wait to hear all about it. It will be a tremendous thing." She looked at the letter again. "I hope you'll go about England some, and go over to France and Italy, too. You can do some of the delightful things you've never done." Zoe's face was radiant. Her eyes were already intent on plans.

"Well, I guess I won't go this time, Zoe."

"This time? Why a thing like this may never come again." Her voice trembled a little, dropped lower. "John, don't you know you have to take these things when they come?"

"Yes, but. . . ."

"You're not going to let this go, are you? When you've let so much slide by?"

He nodded. "I know. But Martha doesn't want me to go alone, and—she couldn't bring herself to leave you, Zoe."

Zoe moved restlessly. She tried to raise herself on the pillows. John didn't notice. He had not meant to tell her about Martha, only she always did get at the heart of things —easily, unerringly. The sharpness of losing this precious opportunity had come on him again.

"You've got to go," Zoe said quickly. Her voice sounded young and insistent. "You've got to have some freedom, some life. Why, you've never had anything, John. You haven't had any trips to the country or fishing or hunting like other men. You haven't had anything like a vacation in years. You've never had that summer on the North

Shore, which you've always wanted. You haven't had any larks, John—any fun. You haven't had any simple pleasures, even."

"Well, I haven't done lots of things that I've dreamed about, but most of us haven't. I've been comfortable, though. Things have gone pretty well."

"Comfortable?" Zoe's mouth was mocking. "That doesn't matter. I know. Why, John, I haven't been really comfortable, physically, in fifteen years; but I know that doesn't matter. What matters is life and freedom—seeing things, having experience. Martha wouldn't let you go alone—I realize that—she doesn't love that way. She ties people up somehow. But she does care, so she'll have to go with you."

"It's strange about life, isn't it? Sometimes the most quiet things have the most life in them. Take you, Zoe. I always feel I'm really alive when I'm talking to you."

"Oh," said Zoe. She looked away for a minute. John sat there quietly.

Then she spoke again. "Martha will have to go!"

"Don't fret, Zoe. You know Martha wouldn't rest easily if she wasn't where she could look after you."

"What if she doesn't? That sort of thing doesn't matter, John. That sort of thing is—selfish."

"Well, I thought we could arrange it all right, but I guess I was excited. I knew you'd want us to."

"I'd love it," Zoe said quickly.

"But Martha wouldn't hear of it. She just doesn't see it that way."

"I know, but if she knew how I'd love it—I'd get along famously. It would make me so happy. Surely, it's such a wonderful thing! It would do her lots of good, too."

"Yes," he said, "that's what I thought. It seems funny, doesn't it, when you're the one that might mind, and you don't; and yet it seems it can't happen now?"

"It seems—horrible," Zoe told him. "You don't know how I've wished that you and Martha would live your own lives. I'd never wanted this giving up everything. As

far as I know you've never had any joy in your life, John. There's always been care and responsibility to keep you from doing things. It hurts to know that I've kept you from. . . ."

"Now, Zoe." He took her hand, her thin sensitive hand that looked as if the bones would easily come through. There was something transparent about the look of Zoe always. Sometimes it made him afraid. "You know I've loved talking to you in the evenings. I'd have hated not having that."

Zoe was thinking. "Why, you never even had a honeymoon," she said huskily; "Martha wouldn't leave me. It was just a year after I was taken sick, and she wouldn't go. So you didn't have that."

"No, but things like that don't seem so important to me now. I didn't mind . . . much, Zoe." He smiled at her. He had almost forgotten the pang of not having the honeymoon. This missing the conference would become like that, too.

"But it's so unfair. Martha—no one—should have taken that away from you. Nothing should have interfered. Sometimes I wonder how it felt to be in love with Martha."

"John," Zoe spoke quickly. "I know what I'll do. I have it all thought out. I'll go with you. Martha can't object to going then." Her eyes were very bright.

John smiled. "Why bless your heart. That's awfully sweet of you, Zoe." His hand trembled a little—that London conference—he did want to go, and Zoe had such an amazing way of bringing back his desire every time he thought he had successfully shelved it. And she made it seem possible too. The idea again tantalized him.

"I couldn't let you, Zoe. It would be a hard trip. It would wear you out."

"That would be all right," Zoe said lightly. "We could plan things. Maybe we could sail from Montreal. That would be nearer, and you could arrange for porters to meet us. I'm not heavy, you know how easily you can carry me, John." She smiled up at him.

"Yes, I know." He smiled back. (How pretty she

looked lying there, with that soft pink thing around her shoulders and the light on her hair.) "Well, it sounds like a fairy-tale, Zoe, but perhaps. . . . What if you got ill, though, and had an attack?"

"Oh, I wouldn't," she spoke proudly. "It would all be so new and exciting." Her eyes coaxed him. John loved the sweet protective feeling she gave him. He liked to feel that way. It was so long since Martha had made him feel competent.

"I'll get Dr. Reynolds to look you over. If he says you're all right to travel, it's a go."

When he heard Martha's step on the stairs—heavy, incisive—he wished suddenly that she had not come back just then. It would be so pleasant to stay here a while longer and talk to Zoe. It was strange what Zoe did to time. It was strange what Martha took away.

The next day, after he had finished at the office, he went to a shipping office on Franklin Street. While he inquired about Montreal sailing dates the excitement of the idea took hold of him again. On a green map of England interlaced with hills and rivers he traced the distance from Southampton to London, from London to Devon. He could still see Zoe's dark eyes and her vivid face encouraging him. He didn't think about Martha's probable objections. He didn't let himself. After all, if Zoe wanted to go, Martha would have to consent. And Zoe did want to go. How wonderful she had been to think of it—to make it possible.

The day was like a dream. There was something delightful in the air even. He thought all the women he passed on the street were charming. The tulips were coming out, brilliant yellow and orange shoots, in the lawns along Delaware Avenue. John thought they had never been so gay.

He stopped in at Dr. Reynolds's office. He had to know that it was safe for Zoe to go. The whole thing hinged on that now.

"I think she can stand the trip," Dr. Reynolds told him. "You can have everything arranged for—meetings, etc. I

often prescribe an ocean trip even for people in a condition as precarious as Zoe's."

"It is precarious?"

"Well, of course these attacks have worn her down. She hasn't much vitality, resistance. She'd snap very easily at any time—any extra strain, worry or effort. But you can arrange to have everything comfortable and easy. The change would be stimulating. I know it would be. The main thing is to keep her from being worried or nervous. In her condition that's dangerous. I'm awfully glad you're going, John." Dr. Reynolds looked at him critically. "You're looking a little tired. It ought to set you up. Oh, and congratulations on the appointment. I understand it's a big thing."

"Thank you, doctor," John said. He squared his broad shoulders and took a deep breath. He hadn't been happy like this for so long a time that he had forgotten how it felt.

When he reached home he was still elated in spite of Martha's disquieting silence and her tight-set lips. He wanted to know if Zoe had told her that she was going, but he didn't like to ask her. Back in the house again, in the living room furnished in Martha's competent taste he was apprehensive. He didn't want this beautiful gossamer dream thing that Zoe had restored to him reduced to terms of objection, imprecation.

"Zoe doesn't seem as well as she did a year ago," Martha told him after dinner. "She seems weaker, can't stand things as much as she could."

"She seemed very bright and happy last night."

Martha looked at him sharply. "Well, invalids have ups and downs, you know. I know more about that than you do because I take care of her."

"Yes," said John. He could never think of Zoe as an invalid somehow, yet Martha was always thrusting that status upon her. He could only think of her as a lovely girl, fresh and vital, who had to rest for a while. Zoe wasn't a girl, though, she was thirty-two.

"She told me her plan," Martha went on. John drew

in his breath. "Of course one can't argue with an invalid; but it will all depend on Zoe's condition whether she's able to make the effort. I don't think you'd better talk to her to-night. She ought to rest. You excited her last night. She was restless to-day. Of course that made it harder for me."

John nodded. He wouldn't tell her about Dr. Reynolds's verdict yet. Martha's look of martyred endurance pricked him. He felt annoyed. He wished that sometime Martha would find something that was easy for her. John unfolded his paper rather absently. He realized how much he had been looking forward to a few minutes with Zoe to-night. He'd like to show her the maps he had got from the agent.

The next two weeks passed quickly. John was busy with plans for the trip. Martha was busy with house-cleaning. She house-cleaned in a wholesale way, upsetting the entire place. At night she was irritable and tired. When he went upstairs to give Zoe her roses she allowed him only a few minutes before she came up, walking heavily, and declared that Zoe must rest. Later, when he thought about it, Zoe's laughing eyes, encouraging him, and her roguish mouth, were all he remembered of those days. She smiled at him as if they were conspirators. It was a new and pleasant feeling.

When the shipping agent told him that the *Empress of India* was sailing a week earlier than scheduled John dashed home to tell Martha that they would have to begin right away to get ready. After dinner he told her. He wanted to tell her at dinner but he knew Martha didn't like things discussed at the table.

"Martha, the *Empress of India* sails on the fifteenth. That only gives us ten days to get ready. I made reservations. Can you do it—you and Zoe?"

Then she turned to him. There was an intense cumulative indignation in her face. John didn't notice.

"I think it's time you realized, John, that this plan for Zoe to go is utterly preposterous. I didn't say much about it before, because I considered the whole thing too absurd.

I couldn't believe you were really serious about it, that you would allow her to do such a thing."

"Why," John said simply, "she suggested it, and Dr. Reynolds said she could stand the trip. I thought it would be the most wonderful thing in the world, Martha, for us all to go. Of course, I wouldn't have thought of Zoe going, but when she suggested it it seemed quite simple to arrange it. And it will be perfect to have her, and you won't need to worry; it seemed an ideal solution. . . ."

"Ideal nonsense." Martha spoke sharply. "You'd better cancel your reservations right away. Anyhow, the whole thing is impossible. I won't have any argument with Zoe; but surely you realize that. She isn't nearly as strong as she was—of course I notice those things more than you—and Dr. Reynolds says her condition is precarious."

"I know . . ."

"You knew that, and yet you planned for her to go. How could you?"

"But Martha, he said the trip would be safe for her. He even said he advised ocean trips in cases like Zoe's. She couldn't be worried or made nervous, of course; everything would have to be very comfortable and easy, but. . . ."

"And you were willing for her to go—to endanger herself so that you would have this pleasure you wanted. It's nothing but criminal selfishness, John. People would think we were crazy."

He felt baffled, as if he were a small boy talking to some one who had been looking at an object for a long time, and saw every angle of it, more than he did, and who was confusing him. He couldn't understand it. He'd thought it was all right—Zoe wanted to go. Dr. Reynolds said she could do it. It seemed perfectly possible and so beautiful. And now Martha was pointing it all so differently. She was changing the entire color of the thing. Was he being hideously selfish? He didn't know.

"Dr. Reynolds told me it was all right."

"He told me her condition was precarious. You just said

he told you the same thing. Much as I should like to, John —you know I haven't been away in sixteen years, and I never have any rest—I would never consent to her taking such a risk. How could you allow her to endanger herself? My poor sister—do you want to *kill* Zoe?"

"Oh. . . ." his voice frayed. He felt a little sick. He wanted Zoe to live of course. He wanted her to live always. Just now he wanted more than anything else to talk with her.

"You might as well tell her." Martha picked up her knitting as John rose.

Zoe was lying on the chaise longue, as she did in the evenings, with something pebbly white and green over her shoulders. He saw her all queerly; her eyes seemed to run toward him, out of her face. John made an effort. He smiled.

"Hello, Zoe." He sat down awkwardly. He knew that he was going to break something lovely and fine in a minute, tear it up before Zoe's eyes, because Martha had made something that had been lovely and fine hideously ugly. But he must tell her gently.

"How goes it?" asked Zoe. She was laughing a little.

"Zoe, listen." He sat on the edge of the chaise longue. "I can't let you go, Zoe. It's too much of a risk. Martha made me see it. I didn't realize . . . I . . . it was so lovely —your going. And I wanted to go so much. But I couldn't let you do it, Zoe."

She looked at him closely. She didn't believe it quite. His eyes looked so unhappy, and he was smiling a queer mutilated smile.

"There's no risk, John. Dr. Reynolds told me he thought. . . ."

"I know, but I couldn't let you. . . ."

Then she flared up. "John, haven't you any courage? Risks, what do they matter anyhow?" Her voice dropped lower; he could hardly catch it. "Even if there was a big risk I'd take it. Why, dreams like this are worth any risk in the world."

"Martha won't let you, anyway, Zoe, and. . . ."

Suddenly the vitality seemed to go out of her. Her hands that had been tense went slack.

"Oh, that makes it difficult—she's so hard to. . . . Oh, I know she's kind, but kindness like that stifles, John. It kills . . . it kills. . . . I wish she were cruel sometimes—I could stand that. Oh, you've got to go, John. Somehow you've got to. I think it means more than anything else in the world." She sank down on the pillows.

John looked down at her. She was so fragile, lying there, like a flower. The green covering about her was like a sheath. Her eyelids fluttered a bit on her delicate cheeks. Suddenly John felt very helpless, more helpless than Zoe lying there so quietly. He wanted to say something sweet and comforting to her. He wanted to comfort Zoe because he'd had to break the beautiful thing before her eyes. Only he couldn't think of anything.

"Anyhow we've had . . . the fun of . . . of planning it," he said.

"Yes, we've had that, and you must have the other." She smiled and closed her eyes. He looked down at her for a long moment. He didn't know how long he had stood there when he heard Martha's voice calling him. Anyway, he could talk to Zoe in the evenings. He had that. And most people didn't get the things they dreamed about. Only this time he'd thought. . . .

He went downstairs and read the paper quietly. Martha sat across from him knitting. He felt very tired now. Martha sighed a little. Half an hour later she went up the stairs ahead of him. He heard her go into Zoe's room.

"John!" she called, "John!" Her voice sounded strained, agonized. He came into the room quickly.

"John, Zoe's . . . Zoe's . . . dead. . . ."

"Oh, no," he said, "I left her just a little while ago."

Why, he had left her just a few minutes. She'd been a little tired, a little upset; that was all.

He dropped on his knees at Zoe's side and put his arms

under her shoulders. She didn't breathe even. He put his head over her heart. Then he knew. Martha was there beside him, crying. He couldn't do anything. Zoe gone. There was something white in her hand—a piece of paper. He took it from between her fingers. He didn't read it. He just knew he wanted it because Zoe had touched it. He couldn't think of anything. Dimly he was glad that he had put fresh roses in the vase on her table. He was glad about that, but the rest of him was an ache.

Later he knew that Martha had taken hold of herself, that she was busy at the telephone, making arrangements—a doctor, a funeral. Why Zoe was the most vital thing he'd ever known; you couldn't make arrangements like that about Zoe.

And then it came to him, overwhelmingly, why he loved Zoe. He'd loved her for a long time. That's why those talks with her had been so beautiful. Oh, God! He loved Zoe. Why, what did that trip to London, the conference, anything matter now? Nothing meant anything. Nothing. Zoe! Why, he loved Zoe. He wanted to tell everybody.

The next day Martha was prostrated. John moved about dully. Martha told him he had to see to things, because she couldn't. She felt too badly. He wanted to say that things didn't matter, that nothing mattered except Zoe, that he loved Zoe . . . and Zoe was dead.

Later in the afternoon of that incredibly long day that seemed like a nightmare she called him into her room. Her eyes were red, and the room was darkened. She was still crying. Somehow he had the feeling that she was like an ogre, lying there on the bed. He hated her tears. He hated everything. And yet he knew he must be gentle with Martha.

"John, dear," she said brokenly, "of course I don't blame you, but you must have said something terribly upsetting to Zoe. You must have. We won't talk about it, though."

"No," he said vaguely, "no."

"But John, I'm all alone now. You're all I have in the world. You won't go to the conference and leave me now, will you? And, John, I couldn't go now after losing Zoe. I couldn't stand it. I didn't know she meant so much. Of course, it was hard, taking care of her all those years, but I never minded. I always tried to look after her, didn't I? People have always said how unselfish I've been. And I tried to give her everything I could. To do everything to make her happy."

He felt that it was all hideous—what Martha was saying—but it didn't matter.

"I couldn't go now, John. You understand that, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," he said dully.

He thought he understood everything in the world now: Martha, a woman with a disagreeable mouth, wrapping herself in a mantle of her unselfishness. Martha was ugly. She was taking an unholy joy in her martyrdom, her renunciations for Zoe. He pictured her mouth quiver with delight when some one passing her told her how unselfish she was. He shuddered.

Downstairs John sank into a chair, and took the little piece of paper that had been in Zoe's hand out of his pocket. It had writing on it—words in Zoe's straight gallant writing.

"I want you to go, somehow," he read. "I want you to have that, John, dear."

He sat there for a long time. He wanted to go now—for Zoe. Not that it would mean anything. But she had wanted it. He decided he would go. Nothing would keep him from it now.

He knew now that he hadn't anything in the world—nothing except the little piece of paper he held in his hand. The paper that Zoe had written before she died. He hadn't his dream, and he hadn't Zoe. But he had this.

He went up to her room. He wanted to read it again there where he could catch the fragrance that had always been near her. Slowly he opened the paper. He must be

very careful of it. He unfolded it gently. His eyes blurred. He wanted to shut out the world, Martha's ugliness. He read it again . . . the straight upstanding little letters. . . .

"John, dear. . . ."

He shut the door.

UGLY *

By DOROTHY PERKINS ESTABROOK

"DYKE AND DEVOE, BROADWAY'S MOST TALENTED ECCENTRIC DANCE TEAM." Johnny Dyke was better than Lora, but most of the cabaret hounds wouldn't realize that. As long as there was plenty of supplementing ice and White-Rock, anything not too rotten would get by. Still, the applause was more than fair, when they left the floor.

Lora leaned against the wall and said, "God, it's hot." She fanned herself with her handkerchief, and Johnny thought, "What's the use of that?" There were white splotches on her face, from the heat. It was fierce, for September.

"Encore," Johnny said. "C'mon, Lor."

She wouldn't. "Why should I sweat my heart out for a lot of dumb eggs that don't give a damn anyway? They've had all they'll get to-night, 's far as I'm concerned."

Johnny pulled at her. "Gee, Lor, we've *got* to!"

All of a sudden she wasn't so hard-boiled. "Treat 'em to a solo, will you, Ugly? Honest, I can't go back, I'm all in."

You could see she was, too. Johnny said, "Well—all right, if you're shot."

"Thanks, Ugly, you're a good kid. I want to see you before I go. I'll wait for you."

He slid back onto the dance floor and disposed his body easily in a succession of the most absurdly incredible attitudes. Every one laughed and applauded; they were enormously pleased at his antics. His face made them laugh.

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too. It had a home made look, and suggested a deplorable lack of skill on the part of his creator. His nose was amazingly large and it was poorly constructed, and his ears were amateurishly put on, at right angles to his head. He had very red hair. His eyes were blue, and so beautiful that they were incongruous in his ugly face. But the audience couldn't see his eyes very clearly, in the subdued light.

They liked his solo so much that he gave them another before he left the floor. He was good-natured, and he was glad that they liked his dancing, because he liked doing it.

Lora got him in a corner when he went back, and her eyes looked all around: she didn't want any one to hear what she was saying.

"Listen, Ugly, I'm not goin' to tell Rosy, because I don't feel like any row, see? And I wasn't goin' to tell you, but you're a good guy 'nd I do'wanto double-cross you, see? But if you're goin' on teamin', you'd better be breakin' some one in, 'cause Saturday'll be my last night. Costello's'll get you a girl, plenty of 'em. It don't much matter who you get, 's long as she can follow all right, 'cause you're the brains of the act, anyway." She sure did look all in.

Johnny was surprised, and he was worried, too. No fun, breaking in new ones. Besides, he liked Lora such a lot—better than any partner he'd ever had. She was a square kid, and kind of sweet, under her hard-boiledness.

"What do you want to quit for, Lor?"

Her eyes moved around swiftly again. "Well—I'm goin' to have a kid. 'Nd this heat gets me."

Embarrassment made him hotter than he was. "Gee, that's tough, Lor. Gee, it sure is!"

She read his thoughts. "Oh, I'm married, Ugly. He isn't much good, 'nd I don't even know where he is, right now. I'll have to land on ma, 'nd that won't make her do any cheerin'. But I always kinda wanted a kid. Shut up. Here comes Rosy."

Mr. Rosenfeld wanted Johnny. "A lady wants to dance with you, Ugly."

Johnny was depressed. "Oh, gee, Mr. Rosenfeld, it's too

hot!" The worst part of this job was these fat old janes who wanted to be dragged around the dance floor, while they told you how they'd always longed to be professional dancers. Still, he didn't get as much of it as the good-looking ones did.

Rosy said, "You'll have to dance with this one, if you're roasting in hell. It's Anita Henderson, A. D.'s daughter, and what she wants, she gets, see? You come along."

Johnny'd never heard of A. D. Henderson, nor his daughter either, and he went gloomily after Rosy to a table at the edge of the dance floor. This jane'd probably be fatter than usual, and be— Holy Cats!

Rosy was bending elegantly from the waist. "Here's Ugly, Miss Henderson."

Johnny became aware that his jaw was dropping, and he restored it to conjunction with his upper teeth. "How do you do?" (Never say "pleased to meet you.") He *was* a fool for luck!

Rosy introduced him to the man with her, and this girl got up and began to dance with him. Johnny took hold of her gingerly, but after they'd gone once around the floor he forgot that she was a knock-out, and everything else except Lord! How she could dance! He did all his stuff, but she was right with him all the time; he couldn't fool her with his trickiest steps. "You aren't a professional, are you?" he asked after a while.

She said she wasn't, but she studied with Ted Washburn ever since she was a child. "I love dancing. It is the medium by which I express my ego." She laughed and turned her eyes up to him, and the roots of Johnny's hair prickled. Her eyes were as green as cold sea-water, and he gulped over the way her lashes curled up at the ends.

He looked somewhere else and paid attention to his dancing, again. "Well, you could get a job any time you wanted to."

"Would you take me for a partner, Ugly?"

She knew she had him going. "You're hired right now," he said.

But she wasn't laughing at him. She said, "I'm serious. I want to dance professionally."

All right, let her kid him. "I said you're *hired*. Starting Monday, and that gives us three days for rehearsals."

"You don't believe me, do you?" She looked at him and made him gulp again, but he said, "Sure. And my old man died and left me a million, and Ziegfeld's waiting outside with a contract for me."

She said, "You're very hard to convince, but I mean it. Will you come and see me to-morrow morning? And we'll start rehearsing on the spot—that is, if *you* really mean what you say."

He'd see her again, anyway. He said the address over, and then he had to take her back to her table. The man with her said, "Now that you've had your excitement, I suppose we can go, Anita?" Snooty. But she didn't let him get away with a thing. She raised her eyebrows and said, "By all means. You can take me home, now, Larry—I've no further use for you to-night." She turned her back on him to speak to Johnny. "To-morrow at eleven, and thank you." She smiled, and her mouth tipped into a soft red loveliness. Johnny was abashed, because he was so ugly.

When he woke up in the morning, he had to stop and think what made him feel so high. Then he began to sing, and he kept it up in his bath until the woman who had the room next to the bathroom knocked on the wall and said, "For God's sake, shut up!"

He put on a blue suit that wasn't as loud as some of his things, and picked out his quietest necktie. All of a sudden he had an instinct that most of his clothes weren't right, and he wanted, terribly, to look respectable, and, well—interesting. His wardrobe depressed him, and then he began to think that this girl had only been kidding him, anyway. Why would a girl like that want to be a cabaret hoofer? He said he wouldn't go to see her, but he knew darn well he would go. He'd never bothered much with women, but this girl was different.

He took a taxi to the address she had given him, and a man with beautiful manners let him in and took his hat. "This way, if you please, sir, and I'll tell Miss Anita you are here."

Johnny looked around, while he waited. He was in an enormous room that was cool and dim. It was the most beautiful room he had ever been in, and there was nothing fancy about it, either. Funny, how it looked so—rich, and there were no gold chairs—not any pictures, even. Yes, there was one, too, above the fireplace, and when he looked at it, Johnny was embarrassed. It was a picture of a woman without any clothes on. She wasn't pretty, either, and she had kind of fat hips. Funny, to have a picture like that right out where any one could see it.

Anita came in and said, "Good morning, Johnny." She looked wonderful. She had on a gray dress with the skirt all pleated, and flat dancing shoes that tied up around her ankles with black ribbons. She looked—valuable, and it wasn't just because she had a lot of jack.

Then he remembered to say, "Good morning, Miss Henderson," and she asked, "Are partners usually so formal, Ugly? Or didn't you know my name? It's Nita."

He sat down beside her on a divan with a hundred pillows on it. "I guess you were kidding me last night. But I thought I'd come and give you a laugh, anyway."

Anita said, "I wasn't kidding you. I'm going to be your dancing partner, if you'll have me."

He looked at her, and he could see that she was in earnest. "But what I can't get is what you want to do it for!"

"Were you ever bored?" she asked him. "I am. I've nowhere to go that I haven't been, nothing to do that I haven't done. I think that work will be good for me, and this is the only kind of work I can do."

"Well, that makes it fine for me." He told her about Lora's quitting. He said Lora felt rotten; he didn't like to say she was going to have a kid.

"I picked the right moment to decide on you for a dancing

partner, didn't I?" she asked. Johnny thought that she could have had him for a partner if he'd had to get rid of all the Loras in the world, but he wasn't much good at saying things like that, so he kept still.

Anita said, "Now we'd better get to work, hadn't we? I don't think it will be hard for me to pick up your steps; I've watched you pretty carefully." She helped him roll back the rug, and put his routine number on the victrola. "I'm ready."

There was nothing to it. She was as light as a feather, and when he showed her a step once, she had it. Johnny got balled up himself, a couple of times, because it was hard to keep his mind on his feet, while he had her in his arms. Her flesh was cool and firm under the silk, and she smelled sweet. It wasn't perfume; more like the way the woods smell, after a rain.

She made him feel queer, sort of gone in the stomach. He had never been in love, but he knew that must be what was the matter with him. He knew he was crazy, too, but he didn't care. When it was time for him to go he stood there hanging on to her hand and forgetting to do anything but just look at her, until she started laughing at him, and then this polite duke handed him his hat.

On Monday night, Johnny went to fetch Anita in a cab. He was excited, but he was anxious, too, because he didn't know what Rosy would say, and he was afraid having Anita in his arms might make him forget his steps. Anita had on a dress of green chiffon that matched her eyes, and some kind of perfume that filled the cab and made his head swim dizzily. All the way downtown he sat as far away from her as he could, and mopped his face and thought, "Gee, I'm a lucky bum! Gee, I am!"

He took her in the back way, and Rosy came out and saw her there. Affability slid down over his face. "Why, Miss Henderson, this is a surprise! Come to see night life from behind the scenes, eh?"

Worry was all over Johnny's face, but Anita was cool

as a cat. "It's a surprise that we planned for you, Mr. Rosenfeld. I'm going to dance with Johnny, in Miss Devoe's place."

Rosy stood there looking as dumb as a saxophone player. Anita laughed at him. "You *are* surprised, aren't you? But please let me try it to-night, and then if you aren't satisfied, you can say so." She smiled at him, and Johnny watched Rosy getting all tangled up in it.

Anita was calmer than Johnny, when their turn came. She said, "You've got stage fright for me, haven't you, Ugly? Don't worry, I'm not going to let you down."

Well, he wouldn't let her down, either. He took her out on the dance floor and danced as he never had before, and she synchronized her step to his as if they were both moved by the same clockwork. When they finished, they had the place in a riot.

The rest of the company was hanging around watching them, and when he and Anita went off, they all gathered around them, laughing and carrying on like a lot of kids. Carrie Bates, the contralto sob-singer, was so excited she forgot Anita was a swell, and went right up and kissed her. "You two were hot stuff! Keep it up, and you'll have Jack Donahue backed off the map." Anita was sweet to them, and you could see they thought she was a knock-out.

Johnny had to laugh at Rosy. He was all excited because they'd made a hit, but he was worried, too. He knew a good act when he saw one, and he knew what a lot of advertising he'd get, with A. D. Henderson's daughter dancing in his place. His face looked funny; as if some one was holding a piece of ham under his nose—he wanted it like the devil, and he was afraid to take it. "But Miss Henderson, I can't take the responsibility! Your father would never forgive me!"

Anita said, "Dad's away on a hunting trip in Canada, and he won't be back for six weeks. But even if he doesn't like it, there's nothing he can do about it, is there? I'm well past my twenty-first birthday, you know."

Rosy felt better, when he heard that A. D. was away. He

said, "Well, I guess we better talk business." Shrewdness peered through the guileless expression he wanted on his face. "What is your idea about salary, Miss Henderson?"

Anita said she hadn't thought about it. "What are you getting, Johnny?"

"Seventy-five a week."

Her eyebrows went up, and she looked at Rosy. You could see him getting nervous. "I'm not working for Rosenfeld's, Mr. Rosenfeld, I'm working for Ugly. I think it will be fair if you pay him two hundred and fifty a week, and he can pay me a hundred out of that."

Rosy was wild, but she just smiled at him and said nothing, and in the end he had to give in. "I'll have the papers ready for you to-morrow, before you decide you should have a half interest in the business," he said.

Johnny was living in a beautiful dream, only he was afraid, all the time, that it might come to an end, as dreams will. Every night he held Anita in his arms, and sometimes he was able to forget that people were watching and laughing at them. And there were times when he did have her to himself, for long hours when they drove in her roadster somewhere out into the country, or when she would call him on the telephone: "Come up, Johnny, I want you. I'm sunk."

She would curl herself up on the divan and talk to him, and her topic was invariably the very one Johnny would have chosen: she talked about herself.

"I'm a worthless person, Johnny," she told him frankly. "I am selfish and spoiled, and I must always have my own way. I'm savage, when I'm crossed. I suppose that's why I've never liked my father; he's always trying to make me do something I don't want to, or stop me from doing the things that amuse me. But he can't do it. No one can. It's probably because you're so different, that I'm so fond of *you*, Johnny. It rests me to be with you, because you never demand anything of me."

(She was very sweet to him, as a queen is gracious to a loyal and useful subject.) "Lots of men have loved me, but

they all want too much. Sometime I'll marry, though, when I find a man who will adore me and ask nothing in return, and when I'm tired of everything else." (Johnny's heart contracted painfully, when she said things like that.)

Sometimes she was soft-eyed and sentimental, and then she read poetry to him, out of a green book. The poem was about some children, and a "tall, thin man." Johnny didn't know what it meant, but the words were so beautiful they hurt:

> "Through the green pomegranate boughs,
> Moonbeams poured their colored rain;
> Roofs of sea-green porcelain
> Jutted o'er the rose-bed house;
> Bells were hung beneath its eaves.
> Every wind that stirred the leaves
> Tinkled, as tired water does."

That was the way her voice sounded, Johnny thought, like "tired water." When she read to him, this poetry became a part of her and made her more wonderful than ever, and at the same time, more out of his reach. He had to sit with his hands rolled into tight fists, because what he wanted was to take her in his arms and bury his face in the white coolness of her neck.

When she saw that he liked it, Anita gave him a copy of the book. It didn't sound the same, when he tried to read it to himself, but he kept it under his pillow, and his hand closed over it while he slept.

On an afternoon in early October, Johnny went back to his room after lunch, and his landlady came up and knocked at his door. "A Miss Henderson's been calling you every fifteen minutes since you went out. A body'd think I didn't have anything to do but answer the phone!"

He got Anita right away, and her voice was as sharp and cold as a thin steel blade, over the telephone. Johnny took a taxi.

Anita's eyes were narrow bits of green ice, and her mouth

was a hard red line over her teeth. She walked up and down, up and down the library, with the savage grace of a panther. "I hate my father, Johnny. He thinks he owns my soul. I'm to stop making a fool of myself and cheapening his name, and I'm through with this dancing business, or he'll know the reason why. Well, he'll know the reason! He'll see. I hate him."

There was nothing soft about her now; she looked—hard as nails, and Johnny couldn't bear it. Seeing her like this did something to the image of her he had in his heart, and he wouldn't have it. He had to stop her. He put his arms around her and held his hand over her mouth. *"Stop it, Nita!"*

She went limp in his arms and began to cry. Her face was against his shoulder, and he held her gently, and patted her. Pretty soon she was quieter, and her arm reached up and clung around his neck. She said, "You're *sweet,* Johnny."

And then she kissed him.

Johnny's arms fell to his sides, and he stood there rigid, afraid of the emotion that swept through him. Anita's eyes were gentle again. "You like me a lot, don't you, Johnny? But why are you afraid of me?"

He spoke very quietly. "I love you, Nita. And I'm not afraid of you. There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do, or give, to make you happy. I know I'm—fresh, to tell you, but I guess you knew it anyway."

He waited to hear her laugh at him, but she didn't. She said, "I did know it, Johnny. And I'm not worth it. But—do you love me enough to marry me?"

Johnny Dyke was a very humble man, but he was not without pride. And he answered her with dignity. "To spite your father? No, Nita, not enough for that."

She shook her head impatiently. "Don't make me *beg* you, Johnny. Not to spite Dad. Because you love me, and because—I think perhaps I love you, too."

They were married within an hour, by a disillusioned looking gentleman with tobacco stains on his mustache.

Anita and Johnny had come away from the City Hall, and Anita had Johnny's ring on her finger, and Johnny's heart was bursting with the things his mouth didn't know how to say to her. Anita had been cool enough, though; she had thought of everything. From the City Hall, they had gone directly to Rosy and told him the news. "We'll have to have more money, now, Mr. Rosenfeld," Anita had said, "at least twice what we're getting. We've come to you first, of course, but after the papers come out to-morrow, we could go to any manager in New York and get almost any salary we asked for, just for our publicity value, and even if we weren't any good." Rosy didn't even argue; he knew she was right. But Johnny hated it, that they should exploit their marriage to get money. Anita knew he hated it; she patted his arm and said, "Don't be cross at me for being sensible, Johnny; one of us has to be, you know."

Rosy gave them the week off, and they went to Atlantic City. At the station, Anita had another inspiration, and she almost made them miss the train. She went off to telephone, and came back triumphant. "I just thought of Amélie Blake. She's sailing for Europe to-morrow, and I asked her if she wouldn't like us to take her apartment while she's away. Do you know that you've married a very clever manager, Johnny?"

Johnny didn't want her to be a clever manager. He didn't want her to be thinking of things like that, in the first hours of their marriage. But he knew he was unreasonable to mind, and not to want to begin his married life in Amélie Blake's apartment, so he said nothing, and leaned over and kissed her, when no one was looking.

The newspapers made the most of it. There were front page pictures of both of them, and columns of details under the headlines: "Society Heiress Elopes With Cabaret Dancer." There was even an interview with Mr. Henderson, in which he said simply and with finality that he had no daughter. Reporters hounded them; if they went for a walk, they were pursued by a half-dozen eager young men in quest of more heart-throbs for the public; if they got into a

wheel chair, cameras gaped at them from every angle. It made Johnny sore, but Anita only laughed at him. "Did you think you were going to get me without suffering for it, my dear? It's a nuisance, but I don't mind when I think how furious Dad is, and anyway, we owe it to Rosy."

Johnny said simply, "I can't stand it, Nita. One of these days I'll take a crack at one of them, and then the publicity won't be so good."

Anita had pity on him, and they went back to New York and took refuge in Amélie Blake's apartment. And at the end of the week an Episcopal clergyman was murdered, and crowded them out of the news.

But if the papers lost interest in them, the public did not, and Rosy was jubilant, as his place was thronged, night after night. People came out of curiosity to catch a glimpse of this mad and romantic young pair; they came again to watch them dance. The Henderson girl was the goods, all right, and as for this Johnny Dyke—well, they'd heard of people being spineless, but they'd never before seen a man who apparently didn't have a bone in his body. Gosh, maybe he couldn't dance!

Anita's friends descended on them in a body, excitedly vociferous, or coolly amused, or frankly curious, according to their dispositions. Almost every night there'd be a party of them out in front, clamoring for Anita and Johnny to join them after their dance was over. They had Johnny in an agony of embarrassment, most of the time. The way the girls looked him over; as if he were a blue-ribbon exhibit at a baby show: "Nita, I think he's sweet! Clever you, to nab him for yourself— I wish I'd seen him first!" Or the red-headed girl, who laughed all the time at everything: "Some one might have prepared me, Anita. I thought all actors were invariably as beautiful as Apollo, and I've been in a state of the highest anticipation, waiting to meet your prize." She turned to Johnny. "You must be awfully clever and amusing, for you aren't really good-looking, are you?" Her eyes were little slits full of twinkles, and Johnny didn't mind her as much as the gushing ones. He grinned

at her and said, "I'm not an actor, ma'am, only a hoofer, so it doesn't matter so much." The red-haired girl agreed: "And my God, *what* a hoofer!" and Nita came to Johnny's rescue: "Spare my husband, Minna. He's not used to your delightful frankness."

The men were a little aloof, patronizing; and Johnny, beholding their conscious perfection, was more than ever amazed that Nita'd married him. He was terribly afraid, all the time, that they'd find out what a dumb guy he was, and then they'd give Anita the laugh. He'd never heard of most of the things they talked about: Complexes, and Stravinski, and some one's newest polo ponies, and a French writer named Proust, and contract, and bootleggers, and cafés in Paris, and the Behaviorists, and whether Al Smith could ever come back. Or else they had violent quarrels with each other, and said things that, in Johnny's circles, would have meant either tears or fists, according to the offended one's sex. But after a while he got used to them. and then he kind of liked them—all but this Hilary Fife.

Johnny could tell that this Fife must be somebody, for the others kept still when he talked, and they were almost polite to him. He was a tall, dark man who looked like a foreigner, only he wasn't, because he spoke English like some of the high-brow actors Johnny'd heard, only more so. He had queer eyes, too; they were as gray and as emotionless as steel, like a curtain between you and his thoughts. He came night after night, and talked to Nita.

"Well, my pretty hedonist" (was he calling Nita names? No, because she didn't look sore), "I understand you're getting your fill of being a popular idol, these days, both publicly and privately." He'd glance at Johnny with an amused look that made him hot. "Doesn't so much adoration pall? It must be a frightful responsibility."

Anita always tried to look bored, with only half her mouth tipped into a smile, the way she did when she wanted to be snooty. But she wasn't bored. Johnny could tell by her eyes; little specks of black came in them when she was excited.

"Who is this Fife?" he asked her on the way home, one night.

Anita said, "Well, Johnny—Hilary's one of my past indiscretions. He's a writer; such a clever one that nobody ever reads his books, but that doesn't matter, because he has scads of money, anyway. He's terribly fascinating, but I'm a little afraid of him. He knows me too well—he pries right into my private soul and drags out all the little things I'm ashamed of. For a while I thought I'd marry him, and then one night we had a terrible quarrel, about—well, that doesn't matter. But I said I never wanted to see him again, and he said, 'You need a lesson, my girl. I'm going to give you six months to find out how miserable you can be without me. When I get back, we'll be married.' Can you imagine my marrying him after that? Anyway, when he did come back, I was married to you, and that's that."

Johnny might have minded this more, if Anita's arm hadn't been around his neck, and her head against his shoulder, during her recital. As it was, he felt unruffled by it. Fife managed to be at Rosenfeld's three nights out of the week, and his flowers were forever lying around the apartment, but Johnny didn't care; he even felt a little sorry for him. He, and not this Fife, had married Anita.

Happiness was what Johnny felt when he had a good job, or a good meal, or when he'd given a quarter to the blind beggar on the corner, or watched the children playing in the park. And pain was different and terrifying; the way he'd felt when his mother died. And the time, when he was a kid, that he'd seen the kitten crushed beneath the wheels of a moving van. But now, happiness and pain were all mixed up together inside him, because he loved Anita so much that it hurt. The way she looked asleep, with one hand tucked under her face, and pushing it ever so slightly awry. The soft curls at the back of her neck, that clung to his fingers when he touched them. The absurd scraps of chiffon under-things she left over the backs of chairs. The way her mouth drooped, when she was tired. Johnny's high, incredulous happiness shone out of his eyes and transfigured

his ugly face, and the bunch at Rosenfeld's, cynical and disillusioned and proud of it, beheld him and failed to pull a single wise-crack.

Johnny couldn't have told you exactly when his happiness began to grow a little less, nor why. Anita was restless. "I hate this long cold stretch between Christmas and Spring, Johnny. Let's ask Rosy to give us a couple of weeks off, and run down to Palm Beach or Bermuda."

Johnny hated saying no, when she wanted anything. And he'd had to say it so many times, lately. He said it now, and felt like a brute. "You know we can't do that, honey. Even if Rosy'd let us off, we haven't the money. We haven't saved a dollar. And that's another thing we ought to think about. We—"

Her eyes had ice in them again. She said, "Don't talk to me about money, Johnny! I'm sick of the very word, and sicker of being without it. If I put up with living on practically nothing, the least you can do is to refrain from picking on me about it. Besides, it wouldn't cost us anything but our carfare to go to Florida—you know Hilary's said a dozen times that he'd open his place down there and take down a party, if we'd go."

"If we went away for two weeks, we'd lose a thousand dollars, Nita. And this Miss Blake will be coming home soon and we'll have to look for another apartment, and that'll take more money."

Rage always made her say cruel things. "I told you not to talk to me about money! What do you want me to do—eat humble-pie and ask Dad to give us an allowance?"

Johnny's eyes begged her to stop. He said, "Nita!" and tried to take her in his arms. But she pushed him away.

"Don't snivel. You make me perfectly sick."

Johnny felt sick, too, because he wanted so desperately not to have words like this between them. But there wasn't anything more he could say, and he put on his things and went out. She'd have forgotten, by the time he went back.

She always forgot, but he remembered. Not that he loved

her any the less, but it destroyed some of his happiness. He knew it was hard for her to get along on so much less than she'd been used to—though it still seemed a fortune to him, and he couldn't see where it all went to. And lately he'd bothered her so, about the way he put "Gee" at the beginning of sentences, and left *g*'s off the ends of words, and about being so dumb at this game they called bridge, and the way he forgot and licked ice-cream off his spoon.

He stopped and bought a bunch of sweet, damp violets, before he went back. The moment he opened the door, she was in his arms. "Johnny, I'm a beast and you're an angel, and I deserve to be spanked! Will you forgive me just this once more? It's only that I've been feeling so rotten, lately, and I'm so fed up with Rosenfeld's and my nose to the grindstone—or should I say feet?"

He said, "It's all right, honey," with his face in her hair. "I wish I had a million to give you!"

She covered his mouth with her hand and laughed. "Money again!" She put Johnny's violets, now slightly the worse for having inadvertently come between husband and wife, in a small vase on the table. A great sheaf of Hilary's roses stood beside them.

Anita was crying, she said, because she had torn her last pair of hundred gauge stockings, and because it was snowing, and because she was sick and tired of everything. Johnny took her to Sherry's for lunch, and then he was lucky and managed to get a couple of seats for Pavlowa's matinée.

When they got back, she settled herself on the end of the divan and looked forlorner than ever. "I'm tired out, from watching that woman dance," she said. "Wasn't she wonderful? Only there's not really much use in trying to do anything, is there? Because there's always some one so much better at it than you could ever be, it discourages you."

Johnny couldn't stand her looking the way she did. He started the phonograph. "You'll never get me to admit the woman's any better than *I* am," he said. He burlesqued Pavlowa's inimitable grace, step by step, with ridiculous

solemnity, and Anita lay back and laughed until she was weak.

She said, "Johnny, you're a pearl beyond price!" Then she sat up. "Johnny! Why couldn't we work that into a routine?"

Johnny saw it at once. They could. "That Spring Song, with the bass jazzed. And we can do soft-shoe, in jazz rhythm, all the time we're being graceful from the waist up!"

She was more animated than she'd been in months. "I'll wear straight ballet costume and tap shoes, and you can wear —let me see—you can wear some kind of a moth-eaten animal-skin, and let your garters show. Why is it that men's garters are the funniest things in the world?"

All day Sunday they worked on their dance, until Anita's eyes stood out from dark rings of exhaustion. Johnny saw her eyes with sudden remorse. "We'll stop now. Gee, I'm a careless goof, not to've noticed you were all in!"

She smiled restlessly. "I'm all in most of the time, lately. I get so bored. But I'm excited over the new dance."

Johnny went out before lunch, on Monday. "I'll see Harry and explain about the music, so he can get it in shape to let us have a couple of rehearsals this week."

He got back earlier than he expected, in the middle of the afternoon. Anita lay on the divan, against a pile of cushions, and Hilary Fife sat in a chair, facing her. He rose when Johnny came in, and spoke civilly enough to him, but the look of secret amusement was more than ever in his eyes. "I'll leave you in better hands now," he said to Anita, and she let him go.

Anita watched Johnny for a moment through the smoke of her cigarette, and then she said, "I'm pregnant, Johnny."

Johnny stood and looked at her stupidly. "What did you say?"

She laughed at him. "I said I'm pregnant. I'm going to have a baby. I went out to lunch with Hilary and disgraced him by fainting on his hands. So I stopped in to see Dr. Maxon on the way home, and I learned the glad tidings."

Johnny didn't hear what she said, after he realized what

her first words had been. A baby. A little kid of his own. He took the news in the traditional manner; he fell on his knees before his wife and wept, with his head in her lap. No wonder she'd been nervous and felt rotten. Well, she'd be all right now. He'd take care of her, and the little fellow, too. He'd never even thought about having a kid, but now he knew that it was going to be the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to him—more wonderful even than being married to Anita.

Anita was talking to him. "Johnny! I'd no idea you'd mind so much! Don't feel so badly! I don't have to *have* it, you know. There are doctors—I'll see one to-morrow."

Johnny stood up. Careful, now. "You mean you'd—get rid of it?" Even his breath waited for her reply.

"Of course," she said. "It's perfectly simple. Nothing for you to worry about."

He tried to speak very quietly. It wouldn't do to send her into one of her rages, now. "You thought that's what I'd want? No. You can't do that. I want you to have this kid."

She was incredulous and derisive. "Don't be a fool! Do you think you could support me, and a child? Do you think I'm going through months of discomfort and hours of agony just because you think you want a baby?"

Johnny forgot to be afraid of her; he didn't consider her at all. He took her by the arms and shook her. "So you're as yellow as that, are you? Well, for once in your life, you're goin' to do something you don't want to; you're goin' to think about somebody besides yourself. I'll worry about the money, and you mind your own business, which is to have this kid. And don't try any funny business, because I won't have it."

He waited for her fury to scorch him, but she looked at him curiously for a moment, then she laughed a little, and said, "Except for your *g*'s you're very impressive as a caveman, Johnny. I didn't realize that the paternal instinct was so strong in you. If you feel that way, I'll have the child,

of course. I admit a lot of things about myself, but I'm not yellow."

Johnny had been braced for a row, and he would have been infinitely less discomfited by her rage than he was by her sudden capitulation. He began to think that maybe after all he hadn't any right to demand this of her, and he was afraid that if he talked any more, he'd find himself apologizing and giving in. So he put on his hat and coat. "I'm going to see Rosy and tell him I'll have to dance solo until I can break some one in. And if he thinks he's going to use *this* for publicity, he'll be surprised!"

But Rosy was sympathetic and helpful. He was a pretty good guy, for a Jew. He would even pay Johnny his full salary, only Johnny'd have to pay his partner out of it. "How about Lora?" he asked. "She was in here the other day, looking for work. She's had hard luck. Her kid was born dead, and her husband's been killed in a brawl in some gambling joint. Lora's used to your stuff."

Johnny brightened at once. There was nobody he'd rather dance with than Lora, if he couldn't have his wife. "That'd be great, Mr. Rosenfeld. If you have her address, I'll go round there right away. Gee, you've been white to me. You sure have."

He found Lora at home in a dingy little room up three flights of stairs. When he told her what he wanted, she fell upon him with thanksgiving. "My God, Ugly, you're an angel from heaven! I was just sittin' here wonderin' whether to blow my last quarter on food or the gas-meter!"

She was thinner, but she was softer, too, and something about her eyes made Johnny's throat tighten with compassion. She was such a little thing, and she hadn't anybody to look after her. He wanted to put his arm around her and tell her not to worry any more, but then he remembered that it wouldn't be quite right, because he was a married man. So he shoved his hands into his pockets and said clumsily that he was sorry about her hard luck.

Her eyes filled, and the tears slipped over and slid down her face. She removed them with the back of her hand

in a swift, impatient gesture. "I can't say losin' Joe was any hard luck, but I felt awful about the kid, Ugly. He—it was a boy. Make your heart turn over to look at him he was so little and—sweet. Not that I want to pull any sob-stuff. Only—I'll never have one, now."

Johnny said shyly, "I know, Lor. I'm sorry as hell."

Johnny felt a little guilty about the way he'd spoken to Anita, but he was amazed at the effect it had produced. She was so tractable. No rages, these days. Most of the time she just sat absorbed in her own thoughts, with her eyes wide and empty. Only she didn't feel as well as Johnny wished she did. A couple of days later Anita went to bed, and she stayed there almost a week. She said she felt rotten, and Johnny was anxious. He got one of the maids in the building to stay with her because he had to be out so much; he was working like a dog with Lora on the new dance.

Anita was irritable because he worried about her. "Don't fuss over me, Johnny, it annoys me. The doctor is coming every day, and I'll soon be all right."

But even after she was up, she was listless and preoccupied. Johnny would have done anything to cheer her up. "Why don't you have your friend Fife come up some evenings, if you get lonely, honey?" he asked her.

She smiled a little crookedly. "Meaning that you'd have no grounds for jealousy, with me in my present state? Well, perhaps I will."

Another thing that worried Johnny was money. They'd have to look around for another apartment as soon as Anita felt strong enough and he knew they couldn't have anything like this one they were in. He sighed when he thought of Anita in the kind of place he could afford for her.

Johnny and Lora opened with the new dance, and they made a hit with it as he had known they would. And two days later he had a letter.

It was a brief, typewritten letter, but the signature sent

Johnny's spirits soaring skyward. "J. S. Shieber" was at the bottom of it. Could Mr. Dyke and his partner make it convenient to call the following afternoon at four, to discuss a possible engagement with the new "Fantasies"?

The great Shieber was very gracious. He said frankly that he'd been watching Johnny's work for a long time, but that he'd hesitated about taking any definite steps toward an engagement because of his marriage. He was doubtful as to whether Mrs. Dyke was of the temperament to persevere with such hard work. But now that Miss DeVoe was back, the time seemed ripe to approach them. Their salary would start while they were rehearsing (Lora's eyes grew round with incredulity when Shieber named figures) and they might keep on at Rosenfeld's until the "Fantasies" opened.

In the little ante-room outside Lora clung to Johnny and wept. "Don't think I don't know Shieber'd never have looked at me if it hadn't been for you! Ugly, you got me the first break I ever had. And I got to tell you: I'd lie down an' die for you, if it'd do you any good!"

Johnny patted her thin little back absently, with his head in the clouds. He wouldn't have to worry about cheap apartments now.

He stopped to buy some flowers for Anita, and they weren't anything that Fife's flowers would show up this time. When he got home Anita was out and he was disappointed. She'd probably be in in a few minutes, though; it was almost time for them to go downstairs for dinner. He ought to be glad she felt well enough to go out.

He began to do a solemn little dance, all alone there, because he felt so happy. Then he felt silly; if Anita should come in, she'd think he'd gone crazy. He stopped and looked around for his pipe. When he went into the bedroom, he noticed all at once that it looked funny, and then he realized that it was because it looked so neat. Anita must have cleaned it up. He found his pipe on the dressing table, and then he saw the note beside it. All of a sudden

he felt sick, because he knew what would be in the note. He read it anyway. It said:

DEAR JOHNNY:

No matter what you think of me—and most of the things will be true—I want you to believe me when I tell you that I meant to have the baby for you, in spite of my own extreme distaste in the matter. (If you'd thought about it, Johnny, you'd have seen that the thought of me as a mother was too absurd for contemplation.) Dr. Maxon thought it was possibly because of the dancing, that I lost it, but whatever it was, I didn't do it willfully.

It was cowardly of me not to tell you at the time, but I didn't know whether you'd believe me, and I didn't feel like another scene.

Now that it's all over, I must admit that I'm glad it turned out the way it did. And I'm more than ever certain that I'll never have a child. Because of this, and because I wasn't much of a success at being poor but honest, and because of—well, a number of things, I am going to Florida with Hilary, and after a while I shall divorce you and marry him. After all, Johnny, I did warn you not to expect too much of me.

Good-by. I do like you a lot.

ANITA.

He knew then that he'd always known he couldn't keep her, but what he hadn't known was that pain could be like this. He was lost in it; there wasn't any way to get out.

After a while what he wanted was to get away from Amélie Blake's apartment. He packed his things carefully. He left the key with the man at the desk downstairs and said that he wouldn't be coming back, and then he took a taxi to his old boarding house. He unpacked his things again and put them away, and all the time, pain pounded in his throat—one—two—three—in even beats. Then he looked at his watch and saw that he'd have to hurry.

He got into his dancing clothes, and a taxi got him to Rosenfeld's. Lora's face was comical; it was all screwed up into knots of anxiety. "My God, Ugly, you had me worried! You did, for fair! I thought you weren't goin' to show up. Anything wrong?"

Johnny made his mouth grin at her and said, "Nothing wrong, Lor. I just got held up."

She took his hand and squeezed it, and her eyes looked past the grin. "Well—I'm glad you got here. You had me worried. C'mon, Ugly, there's the music!"

INTERVIEW *

By DOROTHY BELLE FLANAGAN

"YOU had lived with him long?"

She sat opposite in an old rocker with a crocheted antimacassar on the back of it. She did not look up. It seemed wrong to ask such a question.

"Nine years come this April." Her voice was a mumble.

"He was good to you?"

"Always. Always good to me. He used to bring me candy at first when we was—when we first lived here. Sometimes he'd bring me a pair of silk stockings." She tucked her dull oxfords, scuffing neatly blacked, under the edge of the chair.

"You didn't know he was married?"

Her voice spoke down to her hands again. "I knowed it. That's why we couldn't get married. But he never saw her—"

"You loved him?"

She nodded once, dumbly. Some assignments are easy. Questioning a thin, defeated woman is not.

"When did you find him?"

She looked up for the first time. "It wasn't me found him. I didn't even know he was in the house. I was asleep all the time."

"You didn't hear the gun go off?"

She shook her head, looking again upon her roughened fingers. "Miss Griggsly, my neighbor, come in to borrow an egg and she saw him laying there—laying there—"

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"This room?"

"Oh, no!" Her tone was a realization of the sacredness of the parlor. Nothing could d'sturb it except the weekly cleaning—not even murder. "He was laying on the kitchen floor. She run upstairs and she woke me up. She thought we was married. Everybody did here."

The gun found beside him had been an old blunderbuss affair that must have made a bitter racket.

"It's a wonder you didn't hear the gun."

She looked up again. "I take medicine to make me sleep—for my heart." She put her hand upon the black dress hiding her heart. "Dr. Strother give it to me."

"I've always been afraid of sleeping tablets for fear I'd take an overdose by mistake. Foolish, isn't it?"

"These ain't very strong. I only take one of them to put me to sleep."

She was twitching her hands as if feeling for the apron she usually wore.

"It must have been a terrible shock to you when Miss Griggsly woke you."

"She said: 'Jed's shot hisself! Jed's shot hisself!' "

"Cruel."

"It wasn't true. I knowed it wasn't true. He didn't want to die." She spoke slowly. "He was scared of dying."

"He had enemies? In his business—"

She looked up. "He said lots of times they was men out to get him. He used to laugh and say they wouldn't get him. But he'd be scared after dark if any one ever knocked at the door. He always made me answer it."

"This address was known, as well as his city one?"

She nodded. "He stored it here. In the basement."

"Weren't you afraid you might get into trouble?"

She shook her head. "I thought he'd take care of me."

"You haven't any idea who might have killed him?"

She started the rocker with her heel. "I was asleep."

"You said you didn't even know he was in the house. Didn't you expect him that night?"

The chair hushed a moment.

"He called me up at nine. The clock had just struck. He was in the city. There wasn't no train before ten o'clock, so he couldn't get here till twelve. I went to bed."

"He called you? You didn't tell the police that."

"They didn't ask me." She did not speak defiantly, but dully.

"Why did he phone you?"

"It wasn't nothing. A letter. About some business. He wanted me to read it to him."

"Did you know where to find it?"

She hid her hands under the back of her elbows. "He said it was in his desk. He told me where he hid the key."

"He kept it locked?"

"I'd never seen in it before. He told me where the key was and where to find the letter. He said he'd have to come out and get it if I couldn't find it."

"Did you find it?"

"Yes. There was a lot of letters. I had to open them to find the right one. There was a lot signed Mabel."

"They questioned her yesterday." He had been with her until he took the train that night.

"There was a picture of him and her. She had light curly hair and was fat. One letter said I was a skinny old crow and a frump." Her face reddened. "She was setting on his knee and he had his arm around her. They was laughing at me. They was laughing at me in all them letters—"

"You read them all? While he was waiting on the phone?"

"She had on a hat with plumes and roses and she was laughing at me. She had beads around her neck."

"Did you find the letter he wanted?"

She looked up.

"I told him I guessed he'd have to come out and get the letter himself." Her flat bosom rose and fell.

"Then you went to bed?"

"I went to bed. I took two pills and went to bed."

"Two?"

"I wanted to be sure to sleep." The chair was still.

"When—when did you take those pills and go to bed?"

Her hands tightened; relaxed. "After I'd kilt him."

The clock began a steady ticking. The rocker creaked comfortably. She raised her eyes and twisted a released smile.

"I didn't mean to tell nobody. I didn't want them to do nothing to me. All those policemen asking questions and tramping dirt on my kitchen floor right after I'd got it all scrubbed clean without no stain showing. I didn't mean for nobody to know it. You won't print it in the newspaper, will you? I'll go tell the judge about it. I knowed it was wrong not to tell before. I'll go tell him now, but please don't print it in your paper. I wouldn't want it in the newspaper." She stopped the chair. "I wouldn't want people to know."

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS*

By GRACE KELLOGG GRIFFITH

ELSA, standing—somewhat ignominiously—on the curb waiting for the Miramar Heights bus, watched her husband inch by in their car, impeded by the five o'clock traffic. He was just too far out in the noisy pushing stream to hear a call; besides, Elsa, though she was tired after a long day's conscientious and uninteresting shopping, had no impulse to call. She simply stood quite still, soft-looking and pretty in her rose and green and gray—squirrel coat, snug little hat, buckled pumps—and watched him till the familiar profile beneath his hat-brim gave place to a view of smooth cheek and close-set ear, then to a triangle of nicely cropped hair and firm neck between the edge of his hat and his overcoat collar. Gradually the side-posts, then the body of the brougham obliterated him; after that she watched the receding back of the car with its neat oval window.

Through this she caught a last glimpse of Miss Jane Bishop's head and left shoulder. Evidently Harry was carrying Miss Bishop home again: the car was pointing in the opposite direction from Miramar Heights. For some moments Elsa stared thoughtfully at the point in traffic where its oval window had vanished.

She admired Miss Bishop—reluctantly. The latter, like Harry, a lawyer, was at thirty-five or so already far above the professional dead-level in which one expects to find a woman. Harry said he wouldn't be surprised to see Miss Bishop give them all a run next term for the office of

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county prosecutor. Elsa took Harry's word on it; she herself was not mentally equipped to evaluate Miss Bishop's legal ability.

What she did know was that Miss Bisnop was slender, firm and supple of body, with the slenderness and firmness and suppleness which come of systematic exercise. Sitting there in the car beside Harry, in her caracul coat with its standing collar and jaunty scarf, her trim black hat and long jet ear-drops, she was as modish as possible. The make-up which she used was so judiciously applied that her snapping dark eyes, shapely brows and lamp-black lashes, brilliant pallor and vivid thin lips, looked, if not quite natural, at least extraordinarily effective. It was amazing that a brainy woman should be so clever about her appearance. It left Elsa no advantage.

Miss Bishop's manner, too, as Elsa knew from occasional social encounters, was effective. It was finished, self-possessed, adequate, with the deliberate faint insolence which flaunts a consciousness of power. Toward women she showed a genuine, toward men an affected indifference. But the latter carried an edge of awareness. She was like a sleek handsome cat who lies stretched in a patch of sunlight and drowsily waves his plumed tail, feigning ignorance of your admiring approach. You felt that if it pleased her fancy she could awake; and any sleeping beauty is a challenge to any prince. Everywhere Jane went she seemed to have some man plunging about in the enchanted thicket expectant of the bliss of awakening her.

Harry? Elsa considered the question as she had considered it many times before, and arrived at the same answer. No. Harry admired Jane; he was her friend; she stimulated him intellectually. That was Harry's own account of the relation. She must, she did, believe it.

A bus drew up. It stopped, let off and took on passengers. Elsa perceived that it was hers only as the legend, Miramar Heights, was borne swiftly out of reach.

There! She smote her hands together—a tiny but passionate gesture. Fifteen minutes more to wait!

Yet after all she reached home before Harry.

He was quite frank about it.

"I picked up Jane Bishop," he was hanging his coat and hat in the closet under the stairs, "as she was coming out of Judge Andrews' office, drove her home."

"I drew your bath, dear," Elsa remarked, receiving his amiable but somewhat perfunctory kiss. "Will you have time for it?"

"I think so. We drove around the park. We were thrashing out a case." He ran up the stairs. Elsa followed more slowly. "By Jove," his voice trailed out behind as he ducked into the bedroom, undoing the knot of his necktie on the way, "that Jane Bishop has a remarkable mind, sharp as a razor. She stimulates me wonderfully."

"What case, Harry?"

He laughed. "Not a chance, Elsie! You couldn't understand it in a month of Sundays."

"I suppose not," Elsa murmured. Unluckily it was true; there would not be the slightest use in Harry's expecting to get any help from talking his cases over with her. His frankness was so thoroughly justified that it ceased to be brutal. A more alarming fact was that he had not noticed her dress, a new one and pretty. She had put it on especially for him.

In their room he was undressing with that intimate carelessness which points up so cruelly the essential estrangement.

"We get some of the knottiest cases in the state," he volunteered. "Does me a lot of good to talk them over with some one. Hand me my dressing gown, will you, Elsie? I mean of course some one who can help with the unraveling. Golly, that girl's brain!"

Girl?

Elsa, sitting erect at her dressing table, staring at the reflection of a really charming woman in a gown of silvery cobweb with a slender fall of pale rose ostrich-fronds from one shoulder, heard the splashing of water in Harry's tub, and her thoughts drove on.

"He needs her for his work. He says so and it's true.

He wouldn't lie to me. He's never lied to me. It's just a wonderful friendship. But there's a catch in it somewhere! There is! There is! He wouldn't drive in the park for an hour with—Judge Andrews! . . . What am I to think? The obvious thing?"

That, in the face of Harry's frank acknowledgment of the friendship, seemed unlikely. He and Miss Bishop had been closely associated in their profession—how long? Five years? Harry in love was a masterful man. If he and Jane loved each other he would have beaten down all scruples long before now. Caught in the dark tide of such a passion as Harry could feel they would have been helpless. Long before this, caution and concealment would have become necessary.

No, take his word for it. It was in a way a business deal.

The duel of brains—Harry's brain versus Miss Bishop's—kept the edge on his, held it up to the scratch, agile, alert. And in return, he had in five years done much of a more practical visible sort for her. She had certainly not hesitated to let friendship express itself tangibly toward her own advancement. In fact it had sometimes seemed to Elsa as if Harry played stepping-stone for Miss Bishop rather too frequently for dignity.

Still, this theory of mutual advantage, sordid though it might be, was the surest guarantee that sentiment or, well, sex, played no part in the mutual attachment of the two lawyers, even though one was man and the other woman.

Harry was whistling in the bathroom: *"Oh, Rose-Marie, I love you!"*

The gentle gray eyes beneath Elsa's serene brows looked into the gentle gray eyes of the woman in the mirror and were troubled.

There was no longer anything which she could do for him. The children—Madeleine, Jimmy, Dick—were away at school. Soon it would be college. Then marriage and careers. They were practically off. And the house almost ran itself. Harry's whole life now was centered in his profession. He didn't care about purely social affairs. They

bored him. And in his profession Elsa couldn't be of any help to him except as occasional hostess. She couldn't keep his mind on the jump for fear hers would catch it!

She rose decisively, just as Harry returned from his bath.

"I'll tell Beulah to hold up dinner ten minutes for you. Will that be enough?"

"Five will be enough!" He was in top spirits, rushing about the room in the process of dressing, and whistling all the time.

Elsa went downstairs to the kitchen, sorry that it was no longer necessary or desirable for her to beat up the foamy potatoes or to turn the browning steak in the broiler.

After dinner Harry had to go out to attend a council meeting. He looked very alert and wholesome and clean-cut. A dinner jacket was becoming to him. He wore his black overcoat and soft gray hat with careless ease. Elsa looked at him with pride.

"Don't sit up for me," he said, glancing rapidly about with an absent stare. "I shall probably be very late." His kiss burned her but did not linger. It was like being just grazed by a hot iron intended for some other purpose. "When that city hall gang get to beefing they're worse than a bunch of old women."

She stood irresolute till the echo of his motor was lost in streets full of such echoes. That kiss—it had upset her. It was long since his lips, touching her cheek, had had that dry hot touch, as of an obscure fever. Could it be—was it possible? She shook herself free of the dream. A dead passion never yet rose in its graveclothes!

And now—what to do? There seemed to be few social occupations for the evenings of a married woman bereft of her natural male companion.

The telephone rang. It was Elsa's friend Nan.

"Hello, cutie, how's tricks?"

Nan always talked in burlesque. Elsa took no offense. She understood that life at some time had hurt Nan horribly and that her only chance was to stay perpetually in the

shallows of her own nature like a little fish darting in a sunny pool remote from the deeps where sea-monsters wait.

"Well enough," replied Elsa.

"Are you alone, sweetie?"

"All alone."

"Where's his Nibs?" Antiquated slang; it dated the speaker rather cruelly.

"Gone to council meeting."

Nan laughed. "Elsa, you are so refreshing! Well, this seems to be husbands' night out. Clara and Dot are grass-widows too for the evening. My own angel is dining down-town to-night—with a man from up-state. A big buyer, I understand. Come on over and let's have a little game."

"What time?"

"Oh, any old time. Chances are we'll be sitting up late. I've noticed it takes a long time to sell these buyers from up-state. And I've no doubt the gentlemen at city hall will also carry their profound deliberations to a late hour, what?"

"All right." Elsa did not resent Nan's cynicism, even when it touched Harry. Nan made no secret of the fact that she had lost faith in all husbands. One had to forgive it. "I'll be over by and by."

Replacing the receiver on the hook she was overcome by a wave, a surge, a tide of revulsion.

Clubs. Bridge. Evenings with the girls. Time-fillers!

Standing by the telephone table she flushed with sudden anger. Oh, life was a miserable cheat! It promised you the most extravagant things—miracles of tenderness, radiant passion, deep content—if you'd give all to love. And then suddenly without any warning at all it left you flat . . . a deserted wife.

She dropped into an armchair and pressed her hands sharply against her face.

Yes, a deserted wife. Just as actually as if her husband had packed up and left. More agony to this kind of desertion—if he had really gone away, out of her life, she might have learned to forget.

Her fingers felt cool against her eyelids. Harry, Harry,

Harry! She was tortured by the need for tears, but no tears flowed.

A deserted wife. Where, in heaven's name, had she failed? She had followed the guaranteed recipe for success. She had practiced, but not relied upon, the domestic virtues. She had tried in addition to keep herself desirable. A deserted wife. But of course the world mustn't know. There was still pride. She gathered it about her, like a blanket about nakedness.

Her hands dropped to her lap. She raised her head proudly. One must go through the motions of living. She looked at the watch in her bracelet. It was lucky not to be a crying woman—one could always go on.

They were all waiting when she got there. Nan, with her quizzical smile; Clara, a fragile-bodied woman, rather pale and pensive to-night; Dot, too much painted, alive with some suppressed excitement.

The game wasn't a success. Dot stayed only a few minutes and then was off for some other engagement. The three friends who were left continued to play with a dummy; but Nan and Clara took their bridge earnestly, and Elsa to-night was so absent-minded that it made them cross.

So the game came to a premature end and the radio was turned on. A tenor voice, incredibly sweet and tender, at once in mid-melody filled Nan's living-room: "*—but ah, that spring should vanish with the rose—*"

It was the Liza Lehmann setting. Elsa lay back in her chair. The brighter lamps were snapped off. She floated in a soft dusk upon the stream of exquisite tone. The commonplace miracle, by the simple turning of an ebony disk, had again been performed: a single beautiful voice had been sifted out from all the songs, cries, clatter and roar of intervening miles. It stole undisturbed into this quiet room and filled it with peace:

"The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows?"

The delicate lament comforted her. She closed her eyes. Her unhappiness and loneliness slipped away on the cry of

the song. The secret soft radiance that was in her permeated her whole being.

Let him need others now, let others help him. She had, in love, done one thing for him that no one else could have done; that no one else now would ever have a chance to do.

Nan's living-room was gone. She was in the tiny dark dining-room of the little house on Cleveland Street. The shaded gas-light hanging from the ceiling dropped a wide circle of light on the table. Just out of its edge, she sat on one of the straight chairs, heavy, shapeless, worn by the day's work. Harry, face lined, hands clenched, paced lightly up and down, up and down, out of the dining-room, across the living-room, back into the dining-room, out again.

His voice sounded clear in her ears.

"No use—there's no future for me in Thompson's office. I can work ten hours a day looking up the law for them, then they take my brief and use it whole. That's all right, it belongs to them. But if I'm good enough for that I'm good enough for more pay. I'm good enough for some credit."

Her own voice she could not hear but she remembered well what she had said: that it was because he was a married man they thought he wouldn't dare cut loose.

"And now this opening in Binghamtown— Jove, if I could take it! But I can't—with the baby on the way—"

"We'll have to cut loose anyway, Harry. You'll have to take your chance."

"I can't. Elsa, it would mean our borrowing money and moving a thousand miles to a strange city. It would mean building up an individual practice after we got there. Of course Carter is a wonder in his special line—he was a shark in all the property courses at school. He's established in Binghamtown. He sees the opening for a new firm of young blood, me to handle the corporation work. Of course he'd throw me what he could. But at first I'd have pretty much to bring in my own business."

The child within her stirred. "Harry, you can do it. We must take your chance. There's nothing for you here."

He shook his head doggedly, pausing in his walk.

"No. I can't. Your folks are wild at the idea. Even my people can see I mustn't. It isn't as if they could help us."

"Harry, come here."

He came to her. He dropped on his knees. His arms went around her. "Oh, Elsa, I must think of you and him—first. I'll stick. We'll stick. Perhaps sometime I'll get another chance—safer—"

She knew that he realized he wouldn't. This was his chance, the kind of chance that comes once, not twice. Yet he was going to forego his one chance—for her. She felt the thrill of being so loved, so cherished. But of course she could not accept the sacrifice.

They had talked it all over soberly and at last she had persuaded him.

"Oh, Elsa, Elsa! You're the only being in the world who has faith in me! You're going to give me my chance at the risk of your life!"

"My life! Foolish boy! Won't I be just as well there as here?" But her heart had swelled with her longing to serve him in just that way—with her life, if need be.

He drew her to her feet. She stood against him, no longer heavy, no longer tired.

"Darling," he murmured huskily against her ear, his head bent, "you're doing something that nobody else in the world would do for me. I'll never forget it, never. Never in this life or the next. A thousand years from now when the archeologists dig us up, they'll find the record of it on the inside of my thick old skull."

Her lips met his. Against them he whispered, "God bless you, my darling."

That blessedness had never left her. To-night in Nan's sitting-room after all the years it burned with as clear and steady a flame as when his lips set it alight within her. Suppose she could not help him now—she had given him his one big chance. They had moved here to Binghamtown; he had gone in with Mark Carter. From then on it had been a steady rise to professional recognition and a pleasant affluence. There had been breath-taking days just at the

first: her illness and terror when Madeleine came, with none but strangers about; frequent uncertainty as to the source of the next day's meals; sickening anxiety about rent-day or the installment on the gas range. But then, almost before they knew it, the difficult time was over. . . .

Tr-r-r-r—it was the sharp trill of the telephone.

"Darn!" Nan, in an opposite chair, awoke from some drowsy reverie. "Who's that? Turn off the radio, will you, Clara?"

Clara rose.

"—Among the Guests Star-scat—"

The voice was there no more. The song was done. One grotesque syllable set a period to all its beauty.

Nan had moved reluctantly to the telephone.

"Hello? Oh, hello, Harry. Yes, she's here. Won't you come around?"

She turned.

"It's your beloved, Elsa dear! He's at home. Got home earlier than he expected. He seemed a bit miffed, I suppose, at finding his little wifie out gallivanting. Aren't husbands funny? He's driving over for you. We'll ask him in but I don't suppose he'll come."

Nan was right. Harry wouldn't come in. Elsa saw at once, as with averted face he pushed the car door open for her, that something had gone wrong with him.

She broke the silence of the first few minutes' ride.

"Was the meeting all right?"

"So-so."

"Want to take a little drive?"

"I don't feel much like it, Els."

"Such a pretty moon, Harry!"

He winced. Why?

There was a considerable silence. The car rolled along.

"Was Miss Bishop at the meeting?"

Harry paused an instant before replying.

"Why—yes, oh, yes, she was there."

What was the matter with Harry's voice? It sounded muffled, as if he were talking inside himself.

She could hardly force herself to the next question. She was not used to questioning him.

"Did she leave when you did?"

He paused again.

"Yes. As it happens, she did. I believe she had another engagement. What of it?"

"You drove her home to her apartment, dear?"

"I did."

The words seemed like his usual reassuring candor; but the voice—what did it say?

She summoned all her resolution.

"You know, dear, sometimes I am just a little bit—alarmed about Miss Bishop."

Pause. "What do you mean?" But he did not seem surprised. More as if this were something he had expected—for a long, long time.

"I mean—Miss Bishop—and you."

Harry laughed hollowly.

"You needn't be. I assure you that your husband is more than safe in the young woman's hands. She is a wonder. She has brains, that girl! She knows what she wants and she has wanted just one thing all her sweet young life, and that is—to get there. Success. She has no use for anything from your husband which you might resent my giving her. All she has use for is my influence. Don't be afraid of Miss Jane Bishop! She looks like flesh and blood—*like flesh and blood—*"

That cry, torn from him, a Harry she had never seen before, made Elsa's heart beat fast. What—what awful thing had happened?

"But she isn't." The coldness of his tone was like the dart of a snake's tongue. "She's crystallized ambition."

"Why, Harry!" exclaimed Elsa lightly; but a queer fear stiffened her lips. "I never heard you speak like that of Miss Bishop before!"

"Perhaps I never knew her so well—before."

Her heart caught, hung poised, rocketed crazily on. What had happened that he should know her so well now?

After all, he had turned off the direct route home. The car rolled slowly down a smooth strip of concrete between mysterious woods. Bare trees stretched their branches against the sky, across the platter-shaped moon.

Elsa held herself steady. Her eyes looking up, between widely parted lids, at the moon, were black with terror; but her voice was cool and even as she repeated aloud for her own need the formula which had never failed to reassure her.

"It's been a sort of bargain, Harry. You've helped her. She has helped you."

"Helped me! She! Nobody has ever helped me! I've always been a lone wolf. Tooth and claw against the pack. From the very beginning, when I broke loose from Thompson and Wright against everybody's advice."

Impossible! Was he joking?

"Even mine, Harry?"

"Even yours."

He was joking! No. His profile against the glass in the opposite door was grim.

He had forgotten. When the archeologists dug him up there wouldn't be any record on the inside of his thick old skull—

"But I've shown them! The lot of them couldn't keep me down! Even if I hadn't left Thompson and Wright, I'd have fought my way up somehow. I didn't need help."

Wounded egotism, crying out grotesquely in its agony. But it was the truth. It came to her in a blinding flash. Of course he would have succeeded, even if he hadn't left Thompson and Wright just then. Success was in him. By another road if not that one, he would have made the goal. What she had thought of all these years as a decisive crisis in which she had helped, no, saved him, was actually the merest unessential episode. She lay back in her seat.

"We might go home now, Harry. I'm a little tired."

Life had fallen to pieces. Time-fillers. The motions of living.

At home, out of her silver gown and the silken sheaths beneath it, in her soft sleeveless nightgown and in bed, Elsa

lay wide awake. Scarcely an arm's length distant, in the other bed, Harry, a square of moonshine from the open window spread across the upper half of him, was sleeping.

"Never speak of Miss Bishop to me again!" he had commanded Elsa, with a violence all the more terrible for its repression. "Oh, a very proper, a very proper and virtuous young woman!" He went purposelessly up and down the bedroom, looking for he knew not what—his pajamas, his robe, his slippers. "I could be her office boy, rewarded with a smile. Oh, of course, a smile—from Miss Jane Bishop—reward enough!"

"What more did you want?" Elsa asked coolly. Didn't he realize what he was telling her? Had he got into the habit of thinking her completely stupid? More probably he was not at the moment in the least concerned with her mental reactions. "What more did you want? What right had you to expect more than—a smile? I thought it was a fair exchange: you were her office boy, she stimulated you."

He paused midway of the room. His head dropped; his chin touched his chest. He stood like a statue. "Yes, she stimulated me, all right. *Belle dame sans merci.*"

Yet now he slept. Elsa was not a woman without mercy. . . . She lay motionless and stared at the ceiling. Her thoughts were cool and very clear.

Miss Bishop's régime was over. She had been—a vulgar word for a vulgar act—"stringing" Harry along for five years. What a clever young woman! But to-night she had drawn it too fine. Sometime, somewhere perhaps on that drive in the park before dinner perhaps to get something very special out of Harry (his support for the county prosecutorship?) she had made the mistake of giving him too much hope. Harry had gone out to-night—there was no doubt of it—believing that now he was to have his reward.

And she had cheated once too often.

Or was Miss Bishop's régime over? Would he really cast her off or would he hang on for another five years, riding around in parks, begging for what she was too shrewd—

too shrewd and too cold—to give him, coming home, shamed and humiliated, to his wife?

What, really, did it matter?

The important fact was that she, Elsa, had never been more to him than a woman to keep his house and fill his humblest need. Her one supreme offering of courage and faith had not ranked at all as she had thought. The blessing which she had tended throughout the years like a sacred taper had been only a flare of momentary emotionalism, the spurt of a wax match, vivid—and gone.

What was there to do about it? Nothing. Life would go on much as before. She had plenty of interests—her city, her friends, her children. Harry fortunately was not her whole world.

Life would go on much as before. The only difference would be that where there had been inner light now there was darkness.

OLD-TIMER *

By G. A. HANSEN

"Oh the monkeys—
Have no tails in Zamboanga!"

AN alcoholic bass howled the song heard twenty years before in *cantinas* and barrooms of Manila. The sour notes reëchoed from crumbling walls of the ruined town north of Beaumont. They burst from the cellar across from Battalion Headquarters.

"Aw, tap that old rum hound on the conk. Leave a guy sleep," snarled a voice from the barred entrance.

The kid sentry stalking up and down came to a correct halt: One, two. His hobnails scraped the cobblestones as he clashed his heels together. He felt the importance as well as the weight of his new tin hat, filled cartridge belt and fixed bayonet. He snapped his rifle to port arms.

"Quit that noise, you guys, or I'll call the corporal of the guard!"

Jeers and howls from the disciplinary prisoners in the cellar greeted this order. The song roared on:

"And before I'd do another hitch in Zambo,
I'd rather do a double hitch in hell!"

The young sentry took an uncertain step forward. He thrust the broad American bayonet between the wooden slats forming the bars of the improvised prison.

"Quit it now," he quavered.

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The singer, just inside, lurched back from the steel point. He swayed drunkenly and clutched at the cellar wall for support. Sergeant's chevrons hung by a thread from one sleeve of his badly wrinkled uniform. They were entirely missing from the other. His seamed, bronzed face showed plainly the marks of his recent bout with cognac and the vintages of the *estaminets*.

He glared through the bars at the kid sentry.

"Thuh— thuh hell with you and your whole raw-nosed John Recruit outfit," he shouted.

From the group of twenty or more soldiers crowded in the gloomy basement, two who bore the stamp of the "Old Army" in their trim shoulders and the way they carried their heads, rose and crept forward. They closed in stealthily on the non-com in the doorway.

"They ain't gonna shanghai me to your Hundred-and-Gawd-knows-what Regiment!" the old-timer continued harshly. He battered the flimsy barricade with one huge fist until the slats jumped and rattled. "I dodged Moro head knives in Mindanao before you was born— Served with the Nineteenth at Malabang— Put in a couple of hitches with the Seventh, the Sixteenth and the Eighteenth—!"

He suddenly drove his bulk at the barrier.

"Outa my way, bozo!" he shouted. "I'm a regular and I'm goin' back to my outfit!"

The guard jumped back. He opened his mouth to bawl for help.

Two fellow prisoners grabbed the sergeant from behind. He struggled in their ungentle grip.

"Lay off it, Sarge," panted one of his captors, a stocky ex-corporal. "The outfit's halfway across France by now. These Johns took over yesterday."

The other, a lanky individual whose accents suggested Georgia, drawled, "Yeah, you was too bleary-eyed to know, but our guys was jerked out and rushed to the big push in Picardy. All the old gang is gone except us naughty boys they left in the mill."

Hard boot-heels clattered down stone steps across the

street. The sentry straightened so quickly that he nearly fell over backward. He saluted awkwardly.

"'Shun!" shouted the ex-corporal, loosing the sergeant.

He and Georgia snapped to attention. The prisoners behind them shuffled to their fleet. It was the natty, new major commanding the battalion.

"What's the trouble here!" he barked.

"S-S-Sir, it's that sergeant and them lousy buzzards them Regulars wouldn't take with them when they left," the sentry stammered.

"Hmph!" coughed the major. He pointed to the noncom who exuded the aroma of cognac. "Who are you?"

The sergeant steadied himself with a jerk and squared his heavy shoulders.

"Asa Marvin, sir—"

The major broke in, "So you're the sergeant who was supposed to be such a fine soldier. As soon as you heard you were transferred to my battalion you went A. W. O. L. and came back drunk and disorderly.

"Don't worry, sergeant," the major continued coldly, "we don't want you. We may be a new outfit at the front for the first time, but if you're a sample, we don't need any old-timers!"

The officer raised his voice, "And as for the rest of you jailbirds—"

What the major said was plenty. The two dozen soldiers in the cellar, all under charges for various military crimes, were moody and silent after he had gone.

Although they had been no credit to the famous regiment to which they had belonged, they felt themselves to be veterans and greatly superior to any new outfit. And they resented bitterly being left behind and being now guarded by men who had recently disembarked from a transport.

"Jeest!" said Georgia, after a long pause, "The major sure give us hell. Said we was a disgrace to our outfit."

"Yeah," growled Wank, the ex-corporal, "The little devil said we was moping in the brig while them other guys did the fighting."

Sergeant Marvin sat hunched in a corner, staring sourly at the floor.

"Thuh hell uv it is, he's right," he grunted without looking up.

"Aw, you just got a hangover, Sarge," said the lanky Southerner.

"Gimme a rifle and a pig sticker and I'd show the little buzzard if we're yellow!" Wank snorted.

It was time for the evening strafe. Fritz had an unpleasant habit of dumping H.E. shells on cross roads and communication trenches just about the time when ration parties were hurrying G.I. cans of slum and coffee up to the trenches half a kilometer north of the village.

American gun batteries replied and things were very lively. The little town became more and more of a rubbish heap.

To-night the Boche made an especial effort to give the newcomers a warm welcome. The Germans knew, somehow, that the veteran division had been pulled out of the line and that green troops now occupied the three-year-old trenches.

"Hey, Sarge," called Georgia, "seems like them Fritzes has it in for the major's boys this evenin'."

"Remember that raid the Krauts pulled on us when we first blew in?" asked Wank.

"Aw, go to sleep. This ain't our war any more," Sergeant Marvin growled.

Later the sector quieted down. There were long stretches of silence broken by the whine of an occasional shell. Periods of prolonged calm were snapped by the crack of rifles.

Scared sentries fired at shadows. Then for a few seconds Maxims and Hotchkiss guns slashed the night with stabbing bursts of fire. Spitting flares revealed the dead area between the lines with ghastly light. And then troubled silence fell again.

Marvin awoke in that blackest hour before dawn. The usual noises of the night were ominously hushed. It was the dangerous hour when tired sentries nod and drowse.

Suddenly the whole sector came awake with a crash. Shells, screeching, rushing, roaring swept from the German gun pits. Tons of steel slammed down. The village blazed with bursts. Drumming of constant gunfire. Din, as if acres of sheet iron were hammered with giant sledges.

The prisoners in the cellar were on their feet. They stumbled over each other and cursed. Their voices were hoarse whispers.

"Trench raid!"

"Naw, that's no raid. It's the big push."

"'Spose these Johns forgets to turn us loose and them Krauts gets through an' tosses a couple grenades in here!"

Sergeant Marvin shouted, "Lay low, you birds, when this passes over, we bust out."

"Yeah," said Georgia, "When this passes over them Fritzes will be on our necks."

"It's the only chance we got," snapped the sergeant.

The storm slackened. Shells still whined and crashed. But most of them roared over the town and fell on reserve positions beyond. Farther back, Corps, Division, Brigade, and Regimental commanders and staff awoke wild eyed and gave conflicting orders. After the first few minutes all telephones were out. No runners could get through.

Frantic popping of rifles and the mad chatter of machine guns told what happened in the trenches to the north. Wave after wave of a Sturmbattalion veterans in field gray rolled over the Americans in the first line.

"What you figure to do, Sarge?" asked Wank running with Marvin to the doorway. The Georgian followed them.

"Get me a rifle some place!" snapped the sergeant.

"Huh—thought this wasn't your war any more," grunted the Georgian. "But it's O.K. with me, guy."

They heaved at the clumsy barricade. The wooden bars weakened and gave way. The other prisoners crowded on their heels.

The village street, gray in the light of early morning, was deserted. Their sentry was nowhere to be seen. The scanty

garrison of the town had taken shelter. Runners, clerks in Battalion Headquarters, cooks, kitchen police, a few men to guard the disciplinary prisoners, the major and his staff, were apparently all burrowed deep in cellars and dugouts.

Marvin turned and faced the dirty, ill-favored mob which poured from the cellar.

"Lissen, you buzzards, we got to get rifles!"

The ex-corporal volunteered, "There was some dumped a couple houses up the street. I seen 'em before they run me in the mill."

"Aw, what's the idea," growled a jailbird called Mope. "This ain't our outfit. We don't owe these guys nothin'."

"Yeah," snarled another, "where's the idea us gettin' bumped off? Where's them Johns and their major that spills the bull about duty and dyin' for the flag—"

A mutter of agreement ran through the group. They were prisoners, either under sentence or awaiting trial by court-martial. Their arms had been taken from them. They had been disgraced and dishonored. Why should they fight when they'd had such a dirty deal!

Marvin sneered. "Yella', just like the major said. Ain't a one of you has the guts of a louse!"

They wavered, undecided. The soldier they called Mope strode forward. He thrust his black, bristling chin into the sergeant's face.

"The hell with you—I ain't yellow—I got sense. We fade! You—"

There was a sharp smack. Mope's knees gave way. The sergeant rubbed the skinned knuckles of his right fist.

"Any one else?" he grated.

"Where would you bozos fade to?" argued Georgia. "Couldn't even a cootie make it back through them shells."

"Aw, we'll stick!"

"We'll show them buzzards—!"

"All right," Marvin growled, "Snap into it, then. Wank, you and Georgia take a couple men each and grab off any gat you see. The rest you birds get busy, pronto, and pile up

them loose stones into kind of a breastwork. We ain't a minute to lose."

Under the sergeant's direction they threw up a low barricade. Wank and his companions returned with armfuls of Enfields, bayonets, and bandoliers of cartridges.

"There's plenty more," he panted.

"Hi, Sarge, lookit!" the lanky Southerner called.

He stumbled from a doorway lugging the barrel of a Hotchkiss gun. He was followed by the others carrying the tripod of the machine gun and boxes of ammunition.

"Set her up in the cellar entrance," Marvin answered. "That gives us a break."

The sergeant placed his small force behind the barricade. Though it was lighter, fog and smoke blotted everything in the direction of the enemy.

A man burst from the murk ahead. Georgia jammed the metal strip of cartridges into the Hotchkiss. Marvin grabbed the gunner's hand just as it closed on the trigger grip.

"That's no Kraut!" he cried. He recognized the derby-shaped helmet and square gas mask pouch of the American running toward them.

The soldier hurdled their low shelter and sank down sobbing for breath. His face was blackened and grimed.

"Fritz is bust clean through!" he gasped.

Rifles spat. The machine gun jumped and trembled with rhythmic vibration. B-r-rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

"Gawd, see them buzzards come!"

Large men, gray clad, pot helmets, crowded the head of the street. They rushed. Sawtooth bayonets, trench knives flashed. They swung potato-masher grenades.

B-r-rat-tat-tat-tat-tat! The leading Boches crumpled. More surged on.

Germans swarmed from the side streets. They charged from three sides. Georgia abandoned the machine gun. He snatched a rifle and bayonet.

Marvin sprang to his feet. His rifle cracked. The Boche who lunged, sprawled with arms outflung. Another slashed

with a knife. Wank swung his rifle as a club. Georgia beside him stabbed and cut. There were grunts, guttural curses.

A huge German sprang upon the sergeant. His heel caught and he fell backward. The big Boche poised for the final thrust.

A pistol roared in the sergeant's ears. He saw the blazing eyes of the Teuton glaze and dull. The heavy body sagged.

From behind came the clatter of hob-nailed shoes and shouts from American throats. Led by the Battalion Commander himself, the smoking pistol grasped in his hand, a strange mob struck the Boche. Cooks brandishing cleavers, K.P.'s with bread knives, clerks with clubs, a few with rifles burst upon the enemy.

The Germans, badly shaken by the fierce resistance of Marvin's jailbirds, could stand no more. They broke and fled.

Marvin jumped up. He dashed forward to follow the major whose timely shot had saved him from six inches of German steel in his throat. Wank, Georgia, and the rest pounded at his heels. They drove the Boches from the town.

The weird force, a youngish major, an old-time regular army sergeant, his twenty fellow prisoners, a handful of clerks, cooks, K.P.'s, and the day's guard detail had turned the tide of the attack.

During the night that followed a fresh battalion relieved the major's battered outfit. Next day Sergeant Marvin was called to Battalion Headquarters in a town several kilometers behind the lines. He entered and saluted stiffly. The major returned the salute and cleared his throat.

"You are released from the Guard House, Sergeant. The charges against you and the others are dropped."

"I want to thank the Major—" Marvin began, his weathered face flushing with embarrassment.

The officer held up his hand.

"Wait!" he said sternly. "I can't send you back to your old outfit. In fact, I don't know what to do with you."

"Er-ruh—, couldn't we be assigned to your battalion, sir?" Marvin stammered.

"I'm afraid not!" the major snapped. "You see, Sergeant, you said yourself that you'd go over the hill before you'd join my 'raw-nosed recruit outfit'!"

Marvin gulped. But he stood erect with his shoulders squared. He'd show the major he could take it. He stepped back one-half pace and saluted. He started to face about and go out. The officer's clear blue eyes regarded him keenly. Marvin hesitated.

"Major, I just wanted to say that I— that is, we— we figured we was wrong about that last—"

Suddenly the officer grinned.

"Good!" he said. "In that case, sergeant, I guess we can use a few old-timers after all!"

PIONEER *

By HARRY G. HUSE

I KNOWED she was goin' to up and bust down on us," said Loomis, the separator man. "I knowed it this mornin' an' said as much at breakfas'!"

He wiped the machine grease from his arms and glared at the other members of the crew who had already sought the shade of the straw pile.

"Well, come an' set down an' git the weight off your feet," said Fife, the water wagon flunkey. "She's done busted down an' she's goin' to stay busted down till Culp gits back with a new pinion."

"I figgered she was goin' to do it," challenged Loomis. "I said so when we was eatin' breakfas'. Soon's I see we're likely to git through here this afternoon time enough to pull up an' move on over to the next settin', I says it'll be jest like her to up an' give down on us 'bout an hour before we're finished!"

He moved about aimlessly, peering down the road along which Culp's battered car had vanished townward, turning to glower at the dusty separator and the snaky belt drooping listlessly to the engine.

"Set down an' take it easy," said Fife, and tendered his plug of Climax.

Loomis reached for the slab of tobacco. He bit deeply into its one unscalloped corner and returned the ravished remnant to its owner. He stood for a moment kicking at the tufts of stubble about his feet. Then he moved back to the separator to tinker irritably with its exposed vitals.

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"He ain't hardly got, that feller," remarked Fife, after a moment's silence, "the necessary patience for a Montana dry farmer."

"That's right," said the man from the Goosebill. "That's jest what I was thinkin'. He ain't hardly cut out for this country. Too nervous-like and jumpy. 'Minds me of a feller I once knowed back in Ioway. Had a big red birthmark 'tween his shoulder blades used to itch him somethin' ter'ble. Folks said he'd got all the doorjambs in his house wore plumb smooth where he'd backed up an' rubbed ag'in 'em. There was one time to a dance when he was waltzin' the Blue Danube with a toney city lady from Cedar Rapids—"

"Say," burst out young Speers, a freckle-faced, red-headed barge driver, "I hear a speech some big political feller give Fourth of July what told jest the kind of folks it takes to make a go of it in this country.

" 'Montana's still the last frontier,' this feller says. 'All that's happened is the scenery's changed a little. There's more towns now, an' they got grain elevators 'stead of chutes for loadin' cattle. But out here on the benches,' he says, 'we're the same breed of frontiersmen, a-buckin' blizzards an' dry weather an' a-dodgin' hailstorms.

" 'Montana still rewards,' he says, 'them that courts her with the old pioneer virtues of courage an' patience an' vision!' "

"H'mph!" said Dry Land Dawson, looking up from a pair of overalls into whose frayed areas he was setting a series of remarkable patches.

"Well, that's what this feller claimed," said young Speers.

The old homesteader bit off his thread, reknotted it and eyed his handiwork.

"Sure, that's what he claimed," he agreed. "I heard him my own self."

" 'Courage an' patience an' vision,' that's what he claimed," persisted young Speers, " 'the earmarks of Montana citizens past an' present. Lewis an' Clark forgin' toward the settin' sun, huntin' a route to the Pacific Ocean—' "

He paused, gulped down his embarrassment and proceeded.

"'An' then McKenzie an' Culberston, buyin' furs from the Indians. An' the Stuarts huntin' gold in Alder Gulch an' leadin' in a big army of prospectors. An' the first cattle men runnin' herds on the range before it was free of buffalo. An' then the dry landers with their plows an' barb' wire fences. An' now us agerculturists that've mastered the science of dry farmin'! All men of courage an' patience an' vision!'"

He fell silent, flushing beneath his freckles, eying Dry Land apprehensively.

The old homesteader continued to ply his needle. He turned a corner painfully and paused to readjust his spectacles.

"That's what the feller said, all right," he agreed. "Your memory's A-number one an' deservin' of commendation. Your quotation of the speaker's remarks is practically verbatim with the exception of one or two onfortunate errors of pronunciation. Nevertheless, I still feel myself inclined to remark h'mph, as I done at the outset of your dissertation."

"Well, it sounded real true like when I heard it," maintained young Speers.

"Sure, it did," said Dry Land. "It always does when a political feller's talkin' nice to folks he wants to keep happy an' git the votes of."

"But you've talked a lot your own self, Mr. Dawson, 'bout these early pioneers. You've said a lot of times this country wa'n't an' ain't no place for weaklin's."

"I have," said Dry Land, with dignity. "Bein' familiar with the annals of the West from perusals of his'tries an' other documents, I am not onmindful of the part played in the development of the State by men of action. Knowin' first hand many of the settlers that come in when the range was throwed open to homesteaders, I have related now an' ag'in anecdotes of the first dry landers. I have give them credit for many virtues as well as vices. I have accused them of hopefulness an' bullheadedness an' of yearnin' for

romance and adventure 'thout recognizin' them when they come up an' bite them. But I ain't never accused them of patience or vision!"

"But that's what this feller said was the big thing 'bout the pioneer," still protested young Speers. "Lookin' 'way ahead an' dreamin' of the future!"

"Uh-huh," admitted Dry Land, "that's the way he's always pitchered. I've see him a-many's the time in books. Standin' on the deck of a ship or in the middle of a piece of prairie with his hand shadin' his eyes, gazin' 'way off where it seems like he can see skyscrapers, or maybe packin' house chimneys risin'. Uh-huh. That's your true pioneer. But I ain't never see one!"

"Say, talkin' of seein' a long ways," spoke up the man from the Goosebill, "when I'm to home I got me a telescope I bought outa the mail order catalog. Cost me $3.72 an' makes fur off things look plumb under my nose. Once I had it pointin' up at a big butte stands off a couple of miles from my place an' I could see a prairie dog throwin' dirt outa his hole clear as anythin'. I used to look at the moon, but—"

"Fidgets!" said Dry Land Dawson.

"What's that?" asked the man from the Goosebill.

"I said fidgets," repeated the old homesteader. "Fidgets!"

"I thought for a minute," said the man from the Goosebill, "you said fiddlesticks."

Dry Land laid aside his sewing.

"Fidgets!" he reiterated.

He pushed his spectacles astride his forehead and gazed at Loomis where he still prowled pettishly about the separator.

"That's what makes your true pioneer. Not patience and vision. Just plain fidgets. That's what made the most thoroughgoin' pioneer this country's ever knowed!"

He fell silent, his eyes glazed with reminiscence.

"Meanin' one of them Lewis an' Clark fellers?" asked Fife, politely.

"Meanin' no such thing," said Dry Land. "They was only

explorers that passed through the country. I'm talkin' of real pioneers, an' referrin' particularly to Frederick William Spitz, my old-time neighbor."

"Hmm," said the man from the Goosebill. "Fred Spitz, hmm? Don't know as I ever heard of him. We had a feller named Swallow one time workin' over on the Goosebill—Ben Swallow, his name was, tall, gaunted-up feller with a bald head an' a big Adam's apple."

"Frederick William Spitz," corrected Dry Land. "The three names always went together."

He fell silent again, sunk in mellow recollection.

"Frederick—William—Spitz," he mused, his faded blue eyes sweeping the miles of nodding wheat where the bleak buildings of the dry landers thrust up starkly, like lonely ships inexplicably becalmed on an undulating, windswept ocean.

"Frederick—William—Spitz, an' his oncurable, fidgetin' pioneerin' fidgets!

"It took me quite a spell," explained the old homesteader, when he had mustered his memories and permitted the man from the Goosebill to finish telling what had happened once when he had reversed his telescope and pointed the small end at a neighbor's outbuildings, "to arrive at the basic truth already stated regardin' what makes your true pioneer.

"Mostly I'd took my ideas from the books that makes them all out to be stern-faced fellers and big-boned, upstandin' women that've got too strong for the parts back where they come from an' are out a-huntin' perils and hardships to be bore 'thout flinchin'.

"I'd got it in my mind somehow they was a special breed of people scalin' six feet or better in their sock feet an' needin' a big dose of danger four, five times a day to be real happy.

"I 'member I'd worried some 'bout not measurin' up to the specifications myself, bein' only five foot eight and gaunted up some from always eatin' my own cookin'. I didn't really git to feelin' right about myself until the homesteaders started comin' in earnest an' I see the class of

folks that was gittin' down off the train at the railway station.

"Here an' there you'd see a feller with big hands an' a red neck that'd stoop down an' pick up a handful of dirt an' let it run through his fingers an' ask when it rained last an' what did we do out here for feed for our work horses. But mostly it seemed like the bulk of the new settlers was bookkeepers with asthma an' old maid school teachers an' busted down railway mail clerks an' normal school perfessors.

"I was all het up for quite a spell over the idea of the railroads an' land agents havin' herded such a bunch of people out here. Seemed like it was a crime ag'in them an' ag'in the country. It was only later, when I see our new citizens buckin' up ag'in conditions that'd of scared out your ordinary successful farmer from ever tryin', that it commenced to come to me that like as not it'd always been just such onsatisfied folks that done the real pioneerin' while the solid substantial ones stayed back home and took no chances.

"After while I learned somethin' else 'bout it's bein' what your pioneer runs into an' licks that makes him strong instead of him bein' so strong in the first place that he can lick anythin' he runs into. But that's gittin' away from the main figger in the story.

"He come quite a long time after most of the homesteaders had already got here. We'd already got used to strange sights out on the bench. We'd seen fellers, whose previous farmin' experience hadn't gone beyond repottin' the root-bound geraniums in the front window, a hop, skip an' jumpin' along back of a jack-rabbit breakin' plow, tryin' to keep the horses in the furrow, an' their hands on the handles, an' their feet on the ground, an' the point under the sod all at the same time, an' not overly succeedin'.

"We'd seen ladies in white middy blouses an' khaki divided skirts, with rubber gloves on their hands, digging post holes an' tryin' to manip'late a barb' wire stretcher. We'd helped harness up horses for folks that didn't know the belly

band from the britchin'. A neighbor of mine from Kansas claimed he'd even had to explain to one feller that there was somethin' more to milkin' than just holdin' the bucket underneath and askin' the cow for her coöperation.

"But we hadn't seen nothin' like Frederick William Spitz!

"He come late, as I was sayin'. Some folks might hold that kept him from bein' a real pioneer. He'd been held back some, finishin' his last job of trail blazin' which had to do with some inventions in the artificial leg makin' business in some town back in Indiana. Besides, he'd come here on a bicycle, an' it'd took him quite a spell to make the trip.

"Most of the best homesteads was gone when he come pedalin' into Big Coulee. I'd been into town that day and was on my way out with a load of barb' wire when he come tearin' past me down the coulee. There's a steep grade there for a good half mile. He hadn't no brake an' was tryin' to hold hisself back with the pedals an' it was sure makin' him work. I'd heard him ringin' the little bell he'd got on his machine for quite a spell before I see him. He come on me 'round a corner all of a sudden an' was past before I could see anythin' more'n his linen duster flyin' out straight behind an' his red eyebrows all fierce an' bristly full of yeller dust.

"I was took so by surprise I pulled in my horses an' sat lookin' back down the coulee to see him come out on the flat where the road straightens out to go up onto the bridge. He got there in 'most no time, an' he'd of sailed all the way across the bridge an' into town on his own momentum only there was a flock of sheep had started to cross the road an' they didn't pay no 'tention to his bell a-ringin' an' a-ringin'.

"It seemed like it throwed him a good twenty feet, and the stuff he had packed in one of these here telescope suitcases fastened on his handle bars went even further yet.

"It didn't seem to hurt him none, the sheep bein' all soft and woolly, 'cause when the dust cleared away from the scared critters runnin' off in all directions, I see him up

on his feet pickin' up the things that'd been throwed around when the suitcase busted, and then chargin' down on a big buck ram that'd got a pair of pants caught on his horns an' seemed real mad about it.

"It couldn't of hurt the bicycle none neither, 'cause the next day here he come a-pedalin' an' a dinglelingin' out past my place with a big map in his hand, a-lookin' for some untook land to homestead.

"Well, I didn't git to visit with him much that day. He stopped in to my place to ask me to show him where he was on the map an' git a drink of water. But he had so much on his mind he didn't really open up much. He just stood wipin' his face with a big handkerchief, an' runnin' his finger 'round inside a standup collar he was wearin', an' lookin' at the map, an' takin' big fierce gulps of water.

"I tried to show him on the map where he'd have to go ten miles further on before he'd find a untook half section lyin' in one solid piece. But it didn't seem like he was interested. He'd got his eyes on a string of eight forties that laid end to end in a L-shaped piece in between my place, Ed Helms' an' the Widow Billings'. They got missed somehow an' the land took up all around them. There didn't nobody want a ranch like that that was only a quarter mile across an' two miles long an' you had to go around a corner.

"But it seemed like Frederick William Spitz, which I could see his name was from where he had it painted on his bicycle, an' worked in red thread on the sleeve of his duster, had got his mind set on homesteadin' them forties. A ranch shaped like that appealed to a man of his disposition, he told me. Folks out here in the West and the Middle West, he said, had just got used to thinkin' that a farm ought to lay in a square or a rectangle. Chances was there wasn't no real convenience in it after all. He had a' idea it was another one of these things that was probably wrong 'cause everybody thought it was right. He was just about certain in his own mind that a L-shaped piece like this was the proper shape for a wheat ranch. He hadn't time yet to give the matter as close thought as he would later. Offhand he couldn't

state just what the advantages was. But they was bound to be there.

"He'd got the water all drunk now, an' his map folded, an' was gittin' ready to git back on his bicycle. I'd been studyin' some to walk over the piece with him an' show him the boundaries an' visit some 'bout the country an' 'bout where he come from the way we generally done with newcomers.

"But the idea of ownin' a ranch like that an' provin' it was the best shape for dry farmin' was growin' on him so fast he didn't have time for walkin' or for gittin' acquainted. He went a-pedalin' off over the short grass of the prairie in a big wobblin' circle that took him across the string of forties an' back to the road where he could hustle into town an' have his claim recorded.

"The Widow Billings, I 'member, come out of her shack to look at him when he went by, an' he raised his hat to her real high an' stylish, but in a' absent-minded manner.

"I didn't see hide or hair of him ag'in for two, three weeks. I'd just about got my mind made up he'd found a better ranch somewheres else, one shaped like a W or a Z or somethin', when here he comes one mornin' sittin' high up on the first one of a string of loaded wagons. He'd filed his claim all right that first day he was out here an' then he'd figgered out a new idea of buildin' his house right in town in the lumber yard where everythin' was handy, an' then cuttin' it up in pieces an' movin' it out to his homestead. He'd got all the pieces piled there on the wagons ready to put back together, includin' the necessary outbuildin's.

"Course he hadn't refined the idea near as much as these modern builders of knockdown houses. He'd just built his buildin' all complete, an' then sawed them in chunks of a size he could handle. He'd been kept from doin' his best work by so many people hangin' 'round the lumber yard in town an' makin' remarks 'bout what he was doin'. He hadn't been able to saw quite as straight as he'd of liked to. Later he had trouble gittin' the pieces back together an' keepin' them together in a country like this where you git a lot

of wind. But he'd done the thing different from the other homesteaders an' he'd give the community a new idea in buildin'.

"I had him to sleep at my house while he was patchin' his house together, an' later when he was puttin' it up ag'in after havin' dug a well in the backyard with dynamite. We got real well acquainted.

"Lookin' back now I 'member he wasn't hardly what you'd call a comfortable feller to be with. He had lots of funny ways like gittin' up in the middle of the night to shave when his vitality was lowest an' them bristly whiskers of his would cut easier. An' he asked a lot of questions an' then argued 'bout the answers. But you kind of had to like his free spirit an' the way he went right ahead an' done things.

"From what he told me I guess he'd been in 'most every business you could think of before he come here. He'd managed to leave his mark on each one before he quit. Sometimes the pioneer things he'd done had made him unpopular with what he called sheep-minded people. Mostly they'd just talked sarcastic-like 'bout him. But once, when he'd been in the undertakin' business, they'd run him out of town. It was somethin' 'bout reddenin' up a deceased church elder's nose too much while tryin' to make him look more lifelike. There was some trouble too when he was in the collapsible egg crate business.

"But them achievements, he said, was past an' gone, an' it was weakenin' to rest upon your laurels. A man, he said, should put his mind on the thing at hand an' bring all his energy to bear upon it.

"Well, sir, that was sure what he done now with this matter of dry farmin'. He put his mind on it. I've never knowed a man to put his mind on anythin' as hard as he done, or to ask as many questions. He'd keep thinkin' of them all the time he was by hisself, an' write them down on paper until he could ask me or somebody else the answers. At first you'd think he was just lookin' for advice, like most of the rest of the newcomers. But nothin' was further from his mind. He was tryin' and tryin' to find out

what was common practice so's he could do the opposite.

"At first there I guess he was sure onsatisfied an' onhappy. This country was so new an' dry farmin' was such a ontried proposition then there wa'n't no rules an' regulations an' one man's guess was 'most as good as another's. There wa'n't very much for Frederick William Spitz to disagree with.

"Lookin' back at him durin' that first summer I 'member him as a kind of pathetic figger. 'Cept for the way he'd built his house an' dug his well there wasn't anything really pioneerin' he could do. He couldn't think of no different way to build his barb' wire fences. He just had to dig the holes first an' set the posts before he could string the wire on them.

"He run up ag'in the same thing when he set to plowin'. The sod was so hard an' tough there wa'n't but one kind of plow would turn it. He did manage to hitch his horses up different, three abreast and one out in front to foller the furrow an' give his outfit a wedge shape. He had an idea that it cut down the wind resistance. An' he was able to set things off a little by always plowin' in that linen duster. But taken all in all it was a most onsatisfactory season.

"Most of the load of his discontentedness fell on me an' the Widow Billings, us bein' his clostest neighbors. There when he was sleepin' at my place before he got organized he'd et at the Widow's an' got acquainted with her. She was a big, strong-minded woman but a good feeder. She didn't have no patience with what she called triflin' ways, an' I guess there was lots of times when Frederick William Spitz plumb aggervated her. Her first husband'd been a bookkeeper, an' from what she told, as neat and tidy minded as a column of figgers. He'd got low spirited finally an' killed hisself by cuttin' his throat with his razor. The Widow always seemed real proud that he'd done it in the bathtub so's he wouldn't be hard to clean up after.

"Frederick William Spitz, as I say, must of aggervated her. But bein' a widow she didn't let herself seem aggervated. She really was took some, I guess, by Spitz's man-

ners toward women, which was gallant even if absent-minded. But everythin' 'bout her was just opposite to him. She claimed the way to git ahead was to do things 'cordin' to rule, only to do them harder and stronger than other people.

"He rubbed her crossways all right. That must of been why she took such an int'rest in him. She fed him elegant whenever he et at her place, an' sent him things, an' there at the start she held herself back an' never argued with him. She just kept still an' sized him up, an' started figgerin' how to take him in hand an' make somethin' steady an' dependable of him.

"He was kind of cramped that first summer, as I already mentioned. It wa'n't till the next year that he commenced to git hold of things an' make the country set up and take notice. 'Most everybody'd got some land broke out that first summer an' fall an' planned on lettin' it lay through the winter an' then plantin' a first crop of flax on the new breakin' in the spring.

"Frederick William Spitz had done different to be contrary. He'd haggled up his sod one way an' another to git a seed bed an' he'd sowed it in the fall to winter wheat. We had a lot of snow durin' the winter. Then we had a good wet spring. Come May when nobody else had nothin' but a spindly lookin' stand of young flax, Spitz had the likeliest lookin' wheat field I 'most ever see. Folks come from miles around to look at it, it was so green and purty. The banks an' stores in to town had samples of it tied up in bundles an' stuck in their windows. You'd of thought Spitz would of been real proud 'bout it. But it didn't seem like it meant nothin' to him. He was too busy arguin' an' a-buildin' hog sheds.

"He'd decided to raise hogs after he'd looked around an' see there wasn't a shoat in the country. It stood to reason there shouldn't be 'cause there wasn't nothin' to feed them. The Experiment Station bulletins said not to try to raise them, an' that'd been just like a red rag to a bull with Frederick William Spitz.

"He sent away an' got hisself a lot of brood sows for a starter. Time they got there his wheat was ripe an' he cut an' fed it to them. He'd got enough crop to take them through the winter. Folks said it was a shame to dump money like that into hogs that wouldn't ever pay for the high-priced grain you had to feed them. They seemed 'most as hostile 'bout it as if it'd been their own wheat.

"Everybody was complainin' 'bout it. Nobody's flax had done any good an' it wasn't worth while to cut it. Some folks that hadn't had much money was goin' broke an' others was already discouraged. Things would of kept right on bein' real sad-like an' onhappy there that fall if it hadn't been for the goin's on of Spitz an' them hogs of his'n. Them sows of his was all due to have pigs in the spring, an' he was workin' out some ideas 'bout influencin' the ones that was goin' to be by the treatment he give their mothers. He had little houses for them an' he done things to keep them entertained an' contented. It was hard to tell one way or another whether the sows enjoyed it.

"Well, the next year when 'most everybody'd got in a good acreage of wheat an' Spitz hadn't got none because givin' so much of his time an' thought to the pig business, we had a drought. It come before the wheat was very far in the milk an' it shriveled up all the kernels so that what little crop there was wasn't fit for millin'. It wasn't fit for nothin' but hog food an' you could buy all you wanted at your own figger.

"There wasn't no one in the country had hogs but Frederick William Spitz. He had four, five hundred of them an' plenty of cheap grain now to feed them. What with sellin' them off at a high price to folks that had decided theirselves to go into the hog business an' shippin' the fat ones to market, he sure made a clean-up.

"The comin' fall, when he'd sold off his hogs, he got interested in turkeys. The turkey, he said, was a bird he'd always admired. It had a independent spirit. It hid out its nest, an' it trailed its younguns in the wet grass whenever

it felt like it, an' it'd rather roost in a tree an' freeze its feet than be comfortable in a hen house.

"Everythin' was ag'in his raisin' turkeys in Montana. The coulees was full of coyotes that'd eat nine turkeys for every one you et yourself, an' there wasn't nothin' cheap to feed them. So Frederick William Spitz got hisself a whole herd of incubators that winter, an' ordered turkey eggs by mail whenever he could git them, an' come spring he had four, five thousand of the little birds.

"That was the year we had the grasshoppers. I never see them so thick in all my life. They et up half the wheat an' there wasn't nothin' you could do to stop them but call for help from Frederick William Spitz. He'd worked out a system for keepin' his turkeys safe from the coyotes. He'd started herdin' them the way that you do sheep. He'd take his lunch an' go out with them in the early mornin.' He'd stay with them all day an' keep them bunched by ridin' hard on his bicycle, and he'd watch over them with a rifle. They got so's they'd run right to him when they seen a coyote.

"Well, sir, you should of seen them turkeys go after the grasshoppers. It got so's people would offer him money to bring his army of birds over to their place and graze them. He'd herd them home at night an' the next mornin' him an' his birds would be out ag'in a-skirmishin'. What with the fees he got for his services an' the price he got for the birds in the fall he cleaned up a lot of money.

"That was the way it went for three, four years there. Frederick William Spitz done everythin' on earth 'cept raise wheat the way he was supposed to. An' he never done the same thing two years in succession. Everythin' he turned his hand to seemed to make him somethin'.

"He was gittin' rich, an' the bankers in to town was callin' him mister. But he wasn't happy. Things was gittin' too settled for him. It was gittin' harder an' harder to do any pioneerin'. He'd made out so well that folks was all follerin' his example. They was raisin' hogs an' herdin' turkeys an' diggin' wells with dynamite. Some of them was even thinkin'

of ridin' bicycles an' wearin' linen dusters. He'd got to the point where he set the standards an' the feller he had to go contrary to was his own self. He couldn't hardly find no one to disagree with.

"That was always the reason, I figgered, why he commenced to git real thick with the Widow Billings. Her cookin' may of had a little to do with it. But mostly it was because she was the only person that didn't approve of any single thing he'd ever done.

"Now that she'd got him figgered out she didn't hold herself in no longer. She felt he'd just been lucky. Things had just happened to go right for him. Even if he'd got ahead where others had failed he hadn't no right to take much credit. He'd of gone a lot further, she claimed, a man of his talents, if he'd of used the same amount of strength stickin' to the reg'lar way of doin' things like she'd done. She'd plowed an' planted an' summer fallowed just like it said to in the dry farmin' bulletins, an' she was gittin' ahead her own self.

"He got real thick with the Widow Billings 'cause she'd argue with him. Sometimes I could hear the two of them clear over to my place. She'd argue with him every time he come near her, an' he liked it. He liked it so much he couldn't seem to stay away from her. They was havin' it hammer an' tongs, an' gittin' thicker and thicker. Seemed like one of these here helpful friendships like you read about in books.

"But the situation was too good to last long. She got too strong for him. You take a woman that sets her mind real hard on changin' somethin' she thinks needs changin', an' gives it her ondivided attention, an' she'll git around any man that she's a mind to. I've see it work time after time. Take such things as spittoons in the house, or for that matter, Prohibition.

"The widow set her mind on makin' Frederick William Spitz a steady man like the bookkeepin' husband that ended up in the bathtub. She used everythin' ag'in him. She fed him and flattered him, an' darned his socks an' give him a

battle when he wanted a battle, an' little by little she commenced to tame him.

"Well, sir, it sure made me onhappy. It come so slow an' gradual you couldn't hardly see it happen. But it was takin' place. His eyebrows seemed to git less bristly. He never got up no more in the middle of the night to shave. He plowed his ranch in solid patches where he'd had it all striped before, a strip of plow land an' then a strip of unbroken prairie that'd give, he'd claimed, a maximum of rain and sunlight. He even give up his linen duster.

"Little by little he got calmer an' calmer. Some folks thought it was a good thing—folks like the bankers in town an' the county agricultural agent. The country, they said, was gittin' in its steadyin' influence on him. Only a few of us knowed what a tragedy was happenin'. We watched life in our section of the country git less interestin' an' less invigoratin' an' we knowed the world was bein' robbed of one of its freest an' most independent spirits."

The old homesteader paused to sigh deeply.

"The old, old tragedy of man bein' tamed by woman! It looked like the widow had him. He r'ared back now an' then. He caught a glimpse of the rope like a horse will when you rattle a pail of oats in the pasture. Now an' ag'in he'd git real worried an' come over to my place an' visit with me a little 'bout it.

"That's how I come to find out 'bout Pompey's Pillar. It's a chunk of rock that stood off two, three miles south of my place, a pillar of rock that'd been left behind when the rest of the land wore down an' that stood up out of the prairie like a kind of chimney. Up on its top was one of these here balanced rocks as big as a house, that stood on one corner an' seemed like a push would tip it over.

"Her and him had argued a lot 'bout old Pompey's Pillar. She'd gave it to him for a object lesson. It's stood there for thousands an' thousands of years, she said, while the rest of the land fell away 'round it like ordinary people fall away 'round a big man. It had lasted, she said, ontil it could look

down on all of the rest of the world. It's done it, she pointed out, by bein' firm rooted, dependable an' steady.

"That was the way a man should be, she'd told him. A man like him that the community already looked up to owed it to the community to rise higher an' higher an' give it somethin' finer an' stronger to look at. Him an' old Pompey's Pillar. She'd sure fed it to him! He'd argued back that the old rock had been left there by itself all bare an' useless 'cause it'd got on a dead center an' didn't have 'nough gumption to go either one way or the other. But she'd outtalked him an' had him half believin'.

"Well, sir, it made me feel real low in my mind when I see how she was puttin' out the fires inside him. You wouldn't hardly believe the changes she'd already made. She'd got him to give up them high stiff collars of his'n an' wear the slouchy turn over kind that ordinary fellers done. An' she'd made him think that all them best years of his'n when he was livenin' up the undertakin' an' artificial leg an' egg crate business was just so much time wasted. It made me feel real desperate, but he could still out-talk anybody but a woman, so I couldn't argue with him.

"Well, a month or so goes by, an' then he comes to me an' tells me him an' the widow are aimin' to hitch up together. She's a fine woman, he says, an' the kind of a mate he needs. She's makin' somethin' of him, he tells me. Her an' him are goin' to make a big success in this new country.

"I'm plumb forlorn. There ain't but one thing to make me hopeful. She's got her plans made to go back to Ioway where she come from to make a little visit before her an' him step off together. She's goin' to leave him alone there by hisself for two, three weeks.

"For a minute there I'm real cheerful. It ain't too late if he'll use that time to the best advantage.

"An' then I find she ain't aimin' really to leave him by hisself. She's set old Pompey's Pillar there to watch him. She's got him to promise to stop whatever he's doin' reg'lar three times a day, like he'd say his prayers, an' look at the rock an' remember what it stands for.

"Well, she goes away. He takes her in to town and sees her off at the station. He's dressed just like a ordinary man an' he drives her in slow an' easy 'thout even latherin' up his horses. He puts her on the train an' he comes back home downhearted an' lonesome for her.

"After a while he seems to perk up some. I see him fiddlin' now an' ag'in with his gate like he was tryin' to work out some fool contraption to make it open. Later on he hitches up four horses the way he used to, with three abreast an' one out ahead, an' he starts a-plowin' his place haphazard. But presently he looks over at Pompey's Pillar an' goes back for a four-horse evener an' hitches up the critters the way he should of.

"Things go on that way for 'most a week. He'll start to do somethin' new an' joyous like he always used to. Then he'll look over at the rock an' sober down.

"I can watch him from my place an' see the struggle. Nights he'll come over an' set an' talk. He slips back fast after dark when he can't see no longer an' come bed time it seems like he's plumb forgot the widow. He thinks of a hundred different ways to do things. But come mornin' he loses the ideas.

"It run along that way ontil three days before the widow's due to be back. I'm low an' onhappy an' so, down underneath, is Frederick William Spitz. It means good-by to the good old happy days of pioneerin'. It means farewell to the wild, free soarin' spirit. It means a restless mind tamed down to the same low level as the masses!"

The old homesteader paused to sigh again and clear his throat.

"We come now to that eventful mornin' of July 23 an' the natural phenomenon which occurred on that date in this section.

"Somewhere down in the molten interior of the globe, as the papers of that date elegantly stated, somethin' slipped and the crust trembled. In a place like California that was used to earthquakes it might of passed onnoticed. Up here where

we're used to the ground stayin' steady under our feet it made a real commotion.

"The shocks was light an' done little or no damage. Them that was in the open hardly felt them. In houses it made pans rattle, an' slopped water out of buckets. I 'member how it hit me at my place. I was doin' a washin' an' seemed to me at first I was just bearin' down too hard on the washboard. When I stopped the house was still a-shakin'. So I went outside to git a club an' chase away a mangy mule of mine that I figgered was rubbin' ag'in a corner. But the mule was eatin' grass a half a mile away.

"Frederick William Spitz had been took earlier that mornin' with a strong spell of rebellion. It'd come to him while he was plowin' that he wasn't happy 'bout gittin' married. He looked down at hisself an' at his horses an' at his fields an' he realized he'd got to be nothin' but a pluggin' farmer.

"He got to thinkin' of the glory of them days when he done as he pleased an' let folks say an' think whatever they wanted to about him. He got a sickenin' glimpse of the fences closin' in around him.

"He tried to think of the widow's cookin'. He'd had some of his own tough biscuits an' weak coffee for breakfast, an' he thought of that an' thought of her an' still he couldn't be happy. He turned at last for peace to Pompey's Pillar.

"He turned an' stared an' then he rubbed his eyes. At first he thought he was a little bilious. He rubbed his eyes. The rock was weavin'! He closed his eyes an' passed his hand across his forehead. He opened up his eyes an' the rock was wigglin' worse'n ever.

"Then while he stared it happened. There come a sharper jerk an' Pompey's Pillar kind of hiccuped. The rock on top commenced to wobble. It wobbled forward an' Frederick William Spitz, he wobbled with it. It wobbled back. Then it come stumblin' down off the top in a cloud of dust that took ten minutes to settle.

"The first thing I knowed 'bout it was when I heard Spitz holler. I heard him clear over to my place ag'in the wind.

He let out a war-whoop that sounded like a wild Injun's. He jumped up an' down an' he yelled a hundred yells. Then he onhooked a horse an' got on it an' come on a dead gallop to where he could see me standin'. He couldn't talk at all when he first got there. He couldn't do a thing but point an' point.

"'She's wrong,' he finally howled, with his eyebrows bristlin' fiercer than I'd ever seen them. 'She's wrong, an' I told her so at the beginnin'!'

"Well, he come clear back in the next two days. He done everythin' he'd been holdin' off of, an' more besides. Then he went in town an' put his ranch up for sale with all the land agents, an' he bought hisself a new duster an' a dozen stand up collars. He got new tires for his bicycle an' come home an' packed his suitcase.

"But he waited for the widow. You had to give him credit. He met her at the train an' asked about her trip an' hoped that she'd enjoyed it. He brung her out to her place an' set her down. Then he carried in her grips, an' come right out. He didn't feel he needed make no explanations. He just pointed to the wreck of Pompey's Pillar. If he wasn't in a hurry, he told her, he'd like to stop and argue with her. For a while there, he told her, she had him 'most believin'. It took a earthquake to prove that she was wrong. There wasn't no use denyin' nature.

"He said good-by to her, an' he come an' said good-by to me, an' he went back home to git his travelin' outfit. He'd got the idea he'd like it in the fruit country farther West where you could raise new things by graftin'. He closed up his house an' mounted his bicycle. I see the widow come out in the yard to look at him when he pedaled past. He raised his hat to her real high an' stylish, but in a' absent-minded manner."

The old homesteader broke off to gaze in the direction of the separator where a slight commotion had just sprung up. He listened appreciatively to the muffled curses of Loomis, who danced there in agony, a mashed thumb in his mouth.

"He'll have hisself all used up, that feller," said the man from the Goosebill, "jest doin' nothin'. He'll be all wore out

by the time Culp gits here with the new pinion. 'Minds me of a red-headed feller we had over on the Goosebill. Had St. Vitus dance an' couldn't keep from twitchin'. He ain't cut out for this country. Too nervous-like an' jumpy—"

"Fiddlesticks!" said Dry Land Dawson.

ON A BYROAD *

By JOHN KEMMERER

MARIAN WHITE was thirteen years old and she lived on a byroad northwest of Baghill. She had gray eyes and long reddish-gold hair. Other girls liked to touch her hair, to braid it and wind the braid around the crown of her pretty head. She would sit with them in a hammock beside the low farmhouse and let them play with her hair. Sometimes she looked like a princess. She was beginning to be tall. That was in the summer of nineteen twelve.

She had grown quieter, shy, silent. In the mornings she helped her mother in the house. After dinner she often went across the road to the timber and walked a while until she came to a secret place. It was like a perfect yard shut in by fragrant hazel brush. Here she sat on a log in the shade and looked at the grass, the trees, the birds, the river behind the trees, and the dense green foliage on the opposite bluff. She liked being alone and she loved all these things. Yet even here she was usually a little sad.

But on some days she was a regular tomboy. She rode her brother's pony up and down the road at a gallop. Dust flew high and settled on the bushes along the road. Her mother scolded. Her father sighed. No one could get her to stop. Then sometimes she took a shotgun and went hunting, though there was nothing to shoot but rabbits and pigeons. Or she made the hired man let her drive the mules in the field. If her father was away when she drove them, she used all the cusswords she had ever heard the hired man use.

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The hired man was an old bachelor with long mustaches badly stained by his pipe. When things did not go right he swore furiously. But he was always kind to Marian. They had lots of good talks together. In the evening he would sit smoking and tell her about the land he had lost in Arkansas. For last Christmas he had given her a fine saddle. She liked him.

One evening in June, however, after she had come in from riding up and down the road, he looked at her soberly and said, "You wasn't made to be good, was you?"

The question puzzled and troubled her considerably. For several days she was very quiet and spent all the afternoons sitting on her log and trying to think what was wrong with her. She wanted to ask him what he meant, but she was afraid. She was afraid to ask her mother and father, too. At last she gave it up. But even after that she had a dream in which the hired man looked at her and said the same thing about her.

By and by she forgot it, because she had to think of so many other things. Her cousins, having come to visit her, wanted to be entertained. She was learning to sew and make dresses. She read a sad sweet novel about a little boy named David Copperfield. It was an awfully long book. And every day she helped her mother; sat in the quiet place in the timber; and went to get the mail.

The box stood at the corner where the byroad joined the main road. The mailman passed there in the afternoon. In the evening, when the air was cool and the byroad shady, Marian would ride or walk down to the mailbox. She had to go almost a mile.

Now and then she walked with Lloyd Mitchell, a young man who had to get to Baghill by eight o'clock. He worked in the telegraph office in the depot there at night. He was a mild obliging young man. Once he had begun to teach her the code of dots and dashes. But they had soon let it go. And once he had admired her reddish-gold hair. That was all she knew about him. She could not understand him.

If he came along, she went with him, quite indifferently. They were like two sleepy men going to work.

One evening late in June she started to walk down to get the mail. It was warm and in the track the gray dust was velvety. Looking down she saw that her little slippers were scuffed and worn. She needed new shoes. She wanted a pair of little white slippers for summer.

The road led up a small hill and down into a hollow, where there was nothing but the darkening road. The timber on the west shaded it heavily. Behind the treetops, which were black, the sunset glowed orange and yellow. The colors were so pure and beautiful, so fleeting, that tears came to Marian's eyes. She wanted to keep the sunset.

She climbed the next hill and hurried along a level stretch of road. On the west there was still the dark timber and on the east there was Pemberton's cornfield, with weeds and corn as high as the fence.

When she passed Pemberton's dingy house Fred Pemberton came out and said, "Can I walk with you? I'm going to town." He was a skinny boy a year older than she. He loafed in town in the evening.

She answered, "Yes, you can."

They walked on, she in one wheeltrack, he in the other.

"Going after the mail, ain't you?" he asked.

"Yes. I go past your place every night."

"Why don't you stop sometime?"

"Oh, I don't know." Her mother would not let her play with Fred, because the Pembertons were such shiftless people.

"You stop and see me," he said, "and I'll come and see you."

"All right."

Once they had gone to the same country school and played games together. They played black man, and fox-and-geese in the snow, and horse races with willow whips. But now they were almost strangers again.

At school Fred used to carry a silvery pistol in his pocket. He said he had a lot of cartridges but they were at home.

He was always whipping out the pistol to show that he was quick on the draw. If the girls screamed or if they laughed at him, he was pleased, because he liked to be noticed.

Going down the road Fred swaggered a little and whistled *Casey Jones*. Part of the time he sang the words. *"Casey Jones mounted to the cabin. . . . Casey said just before he died. . . ."* The whistling ended in fancy trills.

Marian was tired of that song. She looked at the ground and the sky. Above the trees the yellow light was faint.

Suddenly the boy whistled like a catbird. Mew. Mew. Mew. It sounded as if a tiny kitten were lost and crying plaintively. It was just like a catbird crying in the orchard in the evening.

"I love that," said Marian.

He imitated other birds for her, staring at her while he whistled. He imitated a robin chirruping. A robin came and lit in a wild plum tree and looked at them inquiringly. Then Fred stopped and, what was very hard to do, warbled like an oriole.

This was enchanting. She felt as though she had found an old friend. They smiled at each other.

"I can decoy quail," he told her. "Come here, and I'll show you."

They scrambled up a bank into the scattered bushes and sat down on the grass. They could see quite a bit of the road. Fred whistled softly. *Bob, bob, bobwhite. Bob, bob, bobwhite.* They watched the road for quail to appear. Fred whistled again. *Bob, bob, bobwhite.* He whistled and whistled. They waited a long time. It was getting dark.

He said, "It's too late. You can't call quail so late in the evening."

They were sitting together on the grass. Marian was thinking about Fred and wondering if he liked her. He turned and looked at her slowly and putting an arm around her, kissed her mouth.

She sat still, but she began to be afraid. She wasn't afraid of the boy. She was terrified at herself. Her heart beat madly. She had never felt so strange. She did not

know what she might do. She said, "I guess I'd better go now."

He held her tightly. He whispered, "I want you to stay." He tried to persuade her to stay.

She wanted to see what would happen. They were alone. The warm night air was sweet with the scent of the timber. There were a lot of things that she wanted to know. She could not decide whether to stay or not.

They heard the sound of faint quick footsteps. A man was coming down the road. It was Lloyd Mitchell. He walked fast because he was late.

"Be still," said Fred.

Marian pulled away and ran down the bank to the young man. She jumped at him, kissed him, and clung to him with her arms around his neck.

As soon as they saw what she had done, they were both astonished.

He laughed. "What do you know about that!" he exclaimed. "Are you afraid in the dark?"

"No," said Marian shortly. She started on down the road toward the mailbox. She was furious with herself. And she had never in all her life been so bewildered.

Lloyd Mitchell came along with her and talked about the Fourth of July celebration that was going to be held in Baghill. There was going to be a merry-go-round on the high school campus. He was very polite. He waited for her to get the mail out of the box.

While they were standing there, Fred passed them. He said, "Hello." He went by in a hurry.

Lloyd Mitchell cried, "Wait a minute, I'll walk down with you," and trotted after him. They disappeared into the dark together.

She knew they would talk about her. She hated them.

Rolling the mail into a tight little roll, Marian started to run up the byroad. The tears slipped down her cheeks, but only a few tears. She ran on and on. She followed the dim track easily, for she knew the road by heart, day or night. She ran all the way home.

The hired man was sitting in the hammock in the dark. She threw the mail in his lap and lay down on the grass beside him. She was hot and tired. She tried to think about what had happened, but her head ached. The tears were all gone, but her head ached and ached. She cuddled up alone on the grass near the man, and went to sleep.

ALONG THE RIVER *

By JOHN KEMMERER

LATE one afternoon in August, McKinley went out past the hickory-nut tree, crawled through the rusty barb-wire fence, and ran down into a shady bushy hollow. Under his bare feet the cool grass and the little flat heaps of last year's leaves felt good. He looked at the wild gooseberry bushes, which were stripped, and at the red-haws, which were still apple-green, and realized that he had started out hungry. Then, thinking of the wild plums, he trotted along the hollow until he came to a spring surrounded by wild plum trees. The red ripe plums hung heavy on the branches and lay thick on the grass, and some of them had fallen into the pool of the spring. He stood on his toes and ate the ripest plums for quite a while. They had a delicate lavender bloom, like the blue bloom of grapes, and a sharp, wild, provoking flavor. By and by, having chased the water-skates off the pool and thrown out part of the warm water with his hands, he took a long, cool drink. Filled, though not satisfied, he lay on his back on the grass and looked up at oak leaves shivering and shaking in the warm wind and heard a plum drop now and then and a cowbell tinkling away off in the timber, and fell asleep.

Presently he awoke, jumped up, and walked on down toward the river. The hollow gradually widened; on the open stretches of grass there were scattered rocks like sheep lying down; and then the hollow flowed under an electric railway viaduct into the bottomland, a tangle of cottonwoods, willows, vines, weeds, and briars, a thick, shadowy jungle.

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In the northwest the sun was going down, sooner than he had expected, rapidly. And in the narrow path, amid the hot green scent of the leaves, he felt the slight, not unpleasant fear that he always had in the familiar timber when things grew dim and sinister and gathered themselves into a single enormous watchful darkness.

But the river was there yet, smooth and clear and slow, with greenish willows on the other bank mirrored black down in the water.

On a long sandbar covered with tracks, Larson was setting night-lines for carp and catfish. Looking around at the boy, he asked, "Does your grandmother know you're out?"

"No," said McKinley. He helped bait the last line with kernels from a roasting ear of sweet corn. He was hungry enough to have eaten the corn himself.

Larson tied a horseshoe to the end of the line and threw the shoe out almost across the river. Plunk. The river was deep there. The line with its dangling hooks dropped into the water. He pulled the line tight and made it fast to a stake in the sandbar.

Then he climbed up on the bank, McKinley at his heels, and followed the winding path upstream, ducking under low branches, until he came to his tent. He picked up a gunny sack and started on. McKinley went right along. They scrambled down to the darkening river and another sandbar and pulled at a line.

Soon three fish appeared, jumping and splashing, a big one and two little ones. As the line came in, Larson watched the big catfish. McKinley rolled up the legs of his overalls and waded out to get the others. They were also catfish and weighed maybe a pound apiece. He grabbed at them carefully, because he knew that their whiskers were as sharp as needles. He caught the first one, unhooked it, and held it squirming and slippery in both hands. Larson, who had put the big fish into the sack, took off the other little one and put it and McKinley's into the sack. So they had three good fish in the wet gunny sack.

After they had set the line again, they went back to the camp. Larson made a fire and cleaned the fish and got a skillet from the tent and began to fry part of them. Fragrance ascended from the skillet. McKinley walked around, picking up sticks for the fire, and sniffed and took long deep breaths of the fragrance of the frying catfish.

"Smells pretty good," said Larson. His face was red, not from the fire, but from standing in the sun and fishing. His neck was red, too.

"You bet!" said McKinley.

At last Larson divided the fried fish equally between McKinley and himself, and put the second skilletful on to fry. Then he cut the bread and they ate supper. McKinley used the lid of the big waterpail for a plate and his fingers for a knife and fork. The fish were browned and white inside, and roasted fat wild ducks in the fall were not so delicious. The sooner a catfish is fried, once he is caught, the better he tastes. Also, the hungrier anybody is, the better fish tastes. McKinley ate half of the fish, half of the bread, and half of a tin of pineapple. And that satisfied him perfectly.

"Mac," Larson said, "are you sleepy?"

"Me? I don't get sleepy."

"Will you do something for me?"

"Yes."

"I tell you; I want you to watch a line to-night. Somebody has been swipin' my fish."

"Who do you think does it?"

"I donno. Some bushwhacker. Will you?"

"Sure," said McKinley. He despised bushwhackers.

"I'll give you my hat and coat and when you set down they'll think it's me."

Larson put on his old felt hat and duck coat, picked up the gunny sack, and started back toward the first sandbar. McKinley went along again.

After they had looked at the line, groping for it in the dark, McKinley put on the hat and the big coat. He sat down and leaned back against a low rock. The sand and

the rock were still warm from the sun. The coat smelled of fish and tobacco and shotgun shells and Larson himself; it smelled good.

From the bank behind him Larson called down, "You look like me all right." The idea pleased Larson. He went away whistling.

Then McKinley watched and listened. The night was so dark and quiet that something seemed likely to happen. He wished that he had a gun. He liked the feel of the barrel and the stock resting polished and hard in his hands. And with a gun he would be prepared for whatever might happen.

Soon he was discovered by the mosquitoes, one, two, five of them. He slapped at them on his wrists and his face. He must have killed twenty. Even after that an occasional mosquito would come along and have to be killed. But finally the air got too cool for them and he was left in peace.

He listened anxiously. His ears felt cocked forward like the ears of a dog or a fox on the alert. He heard the dark water slipping slowly past, or thought he did. He heard, no louder than his breathing, the rush of the riffle a mile downstream. Sometimes there would be the sound of a fish jumping, a remote sound. Once in a while the duck coat would rustle. He listened for hours and hours. But in the timber everything was quiet.

About midnight, probably, he heard two men come walking nearer along the path. They brushed against the bushes, their feet softly packed the sand in the path, and at last he heard the soles of their shoes creaking. The men stopped, on the edge of the bank, almost behind him but a little upstream, and whispered.

The first man said, "Here's that feller again."

The second man said, "We might as well go home."

Then the first one asked, "What time is it?"

Glancing back out of the corner of his eye McKinley saw the tiny red tip of a cigarette. The men were looking at a watch.

"One o'clock," said the second man. "One: six."

The first man clicked his teeth together. "I never saw such a Swede!" he said.

"We might as well go home," said the second.

"Yes," said the first, "I reckon we might as well."

McKinley listened to the men retreating cautiously. He imagined them stealing back along the path, Indian file; they dodged Larson somewhere, went on up the river to where the country and the people were rough, arrived at a ramshackle cabin, and crawled grumbling into bed. Meanwhile the noises of their walking dwindled away and the timber grew quiet again. Then he recalled every word that they had said, so that he could tell anybody just what had happened.

He leaned back again and had a good rest and looked up at the sky. When he leaned far back, he could see the ends of the branches overhanging the sandbar and darker than the sky and very still. There were no clouds at all. And the sky was full of stars. Before him, deep in the dark smooth water, they moved glimmering upstream. But the sky was really deep, and motionless and light, the stars sparkling; and the longer he looked, the deeper it seemed, and the more and more distant and immense and strange.

The river looked late now, and smelled late. Above the water there suddenly appeared a pale, heavy fog. The air had chilled. McKinley dug his feet into the sand and pulled the coat close around him to keep warm, and waited for Larson, and comfortably fell asleep.

When he awoke at dawn, Larson stood in front of him, holding a big catfish by the gills and talking. "Get up, Mac," he said, "and we'll go and make some coffee." It was a good time for coffee.

McKinley jumped up. The sand flew off his feet and his hat fell off. He threw down the coat. A white mist hung over the splendid river swinging by. In the trees the birds were chirping and singing. And it was morning.

PAY-DAY *

By CHARLES J. NAYLOR

THE soldier last paid swept his money into his hat and left the long, bare room.

"Saddler Calhoun," called Captain Bayard.

The man next in line slouched his lanky frame forward and by way of salute waved a bony hand in the general direction of the pay-table.

"Calhoun," repeated the paymaster.

The saddler nodded, and shifted the lump in his cheek.

"Five dollars and eighty-nine cents," sang the clerk.

"Wagoner Murphy," called the captain.

Calhoun picked up the ten-peso note and the change, coin by coin, from the blanketed table.

"This h'yer ain't right," he drawled, and fixed his watery blue eyes on Captain Bayard.

"What's wrong with it?" snapped the paymaster.

"They's a lot missin' h'yer outa fifteen dollars."

The paying officer looked at the captain; the first sergeant nodded his head as if he had won a bet; the troop clerk, as one who never tires of the same show, grinned and ran an inky finger along a ruled line on the pay-roll.

"Deductions: Summary Court, seven dollars," the clerk read off. "Q. M. Supplies, twelve cents. Ordnance. . . ."

"All right," put in the captain, with decision. "Get out of the way, Calhoun."

The saddler looked at his troop-commander with reproach and meandered out, muttering. He halted at the top of the steep flight of steps leading from the veranda, pushed his

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campaign hat back, and rumpled more thoroughly his sparse thatch of sandy hair. Every pay-day was like this. Each month he was up against the same thing. As soon as he got some money it was all gone. Even before he got it!

He pulled from his pocket the crumpled note and the silver. He scowled at the money and wrinkled his nose. Here he'd been in the army twenty-six years, counting double time for foreign service, and this was how rich *he* was. And at that he owed the fiver to the captain. Eighty-nine cents! Seven dollars the price of a drunk. Well, it was worth it. What was a fine now and then? A fellow had to get soused once in a while—after all them years. Calhoun spat, stuffed the money back, and rubbed his veiny, pointed nose as he stared vaguely off over the old wall.

This corner of the town had been the site of a blockhouse in the days of the Spaniards. But now the moldering wall formed two sides of the base of a modern administration building topped by a red, corrugated-iron roof which stood out among the fronds of the royal palms like spilled paint in a springtime meadow. On the left the land fell away from the nipa-thatched shelters that served as stables and led the eye through the aisles of a coconut-grove to the beach. On Calhoun's right stretched a level sun-blistered plain where the cavalry drilled and across which, now, could be seen a party of Moro women, brilliant in red and yellow *jabuls* drawn over their heads against the blaze in the pale sky. They were followed by native men in skin-tight lavender trousers and short purple jackets open on bare brown chests. The Head Men as befitted their dignity bestrode the Malay ponies common to the island. Barongs with hilts of ivory and silver inlay, capable of lopping off a man's arm at one stroke, hung in the twisted loin-cloths of the riders.

"Play-actin' niggers!" sniffed Calhoun, drawing the back of his hand across his mouth.

He peered in at the door to see if the captain was coming yet. He followed with a dull eye the lichened, loop-holed wall that flared off from the far side of the building. Below

him at the foot of the wall ran the road leading from the stables to the main gate and beyond that to the native village of Tulai. The road was bordered on the side next the wall by a ditch rank with long cogon grass and on the other by a close-set row of royal palms, whose enormous leaves nearly swept the ground. Restless, the saddler turned again and looked off down the hot avenue that led to the great stone barracks facing the broad plaza dotted with acacias. Fellow troopers streamed by him counting their money and making for the big, cool squadrooms where crap games were already starting. On the far side of the plaza was Chino Sam's. Calhoun jingled the coins in his pockets; his mouth was dry, and he licked his lips. A vague but compelling desire disturbed him.

Captain Bayard stepped out of the door. He was a short, nervous man, with a straggly mustache and black hair sprinkled with gray. His dark eyes were alert, and his manner uncompromising. Officers and men, save only Calhoun, knew him for a martinet, and to the saddler the captain was outwardly as strict and as impartial as to the others. Only the continued presence of the old trooper in the outfit testified to the feeling, no doubt unsuspected by himself, cherished by the troop-commander. No other man of like character, or lack of character, would have been tolerated for a day, and this Calhoun knew very well. Four years more and he would retire, and he was convinced that he would be looked after then too as he had been during his later enlistments.

As Captain Bayard crossed the veranda Calhoun thrust out a skinny hand, freckled and hairy, and tendered the bill doled out to him by the paymaster.

"What's this?"

"Suh, whut the cap'n loaned me las' pay-day."

"Yes, yes, so I did, yes." Slipping the money into his pocket the captain went on toward his quarters.

Calhoun studied the remnants of his month's pay and crossed the plaza, avoiding the play of naked children and lean dogs under the weak and tremulous shadows of the

acacias. Sam's was cool. He liked the smell of it. The noise too from the loud-mouthed soldiers, packers, and derelict Spaniards was pleasant. He settled himself in a corner with his beer. It was good, and he let it slide over his tongue, lingering on the taste. He watched the weaving crowd in front of the worm-eaten bar, but it wasn't like the old days in the Arizona desert when they were after Geronimo. Him and the captain—lieutenant he was then. Not even like the later days when the two of them had sloshed through the rice-paddies in Luzon, bullets splashing around. There was nothing much in this God-forsaken country, this dinky little island of Jolo in the Sulu Sea. Every time you went on a hike you ran plumb into the ocean no matter which way you went. And these here Moros were no good! They got down in their cottas (hell of a way to say trenches!) and there they stuck until you shot up the whole mess of them one at a time or cleaned them out with bayonets. Except the *juramentados*. Calhoun nodded a grudging admiration. When they ran amuck and carved a bunch of fellows up they were live enough. More like Apaches—made life interesting. *They* jumped you good and proper!

The raucous laughter, the cursing, the tag-ends of careless talk eddied round the saddler as his mind drifted back and forth along the threads of memory. When only foam was left in the bottom of his big glass he elbowed his way through the growing crowd, which opened up as his sharp features were recognized.

"H'lo, old-timer."

"That's right! Fill 'em up, you ol' scalper!"

"Sam! Don't you see the gentleman wants a drink?"

"Step out, Sam! You're a-keepin' my frien' waitin'!'

Calhoun ignored the banter, regarding the youngsters about him with a calm pity, and went back to his corner. There, coaxed by the soothing beer, the past filed by him in broken pictures.

Yes, sir, there he was, a rookie, just joined, shy and mighty proud to line up at the post trader's with those hard-bit troopers who could hold a powerful load of rot-gut in gar-

rison and ride to hell-and-gone in the field. Then the shavetail had come, the new lieutenant, Bayard. Together they trailed the Indians; together they jumped hidden *rancheros;* and they had been wounded in the same scrap. By that time Calhoun was a sergeant. Memory came through strongly, and his bleared eyes looked down into the melting bubbles that clung to his yellow drink. He smiled.

That time a million painted devils had surprised their small column, and the troop had fallen back to cover leaving Calhoun turning and twisting in the sage. He remembered very well that burning in his breast and the pain in his shattered leg.

Great times, great times—not like this baby show, where the niggers dressed up like in the theayter. That bullet was somewhere in his back; and at big blow-outs Bayard wore the medal hung on a ribbon round his neck, the blue ribbon and stars on it he got for going back and bringing in Sergeant Calhoun.

The saddler's weak eyes watered, and he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

After that of course he'd just followed the lieutenant. If they were in different regiments Calhoun would transfer, or wait for his discharge and reënlist where Bayard was. And always when he stepped into a new orderly room the officer would jump up and grab his hand.

Calhoun grinned and took a long pull at the beer.

Then there was that fuss up in Luzon twelve years later in the rice-paddy near Tarlac. Just in the nick of time he'd busted up the plan of an insurrecto with a bolo, a plan that sure would have done for Bayard, all shot up and face down in the mud. Shin deep in soup he'd packed the new captain through the slapping bullets to a peacefuller place in a carabao wallow.

With a needle-pricked and black-nailed forefinger Calhoun touched the faded, starred blue ribbon on his sunken chest. The medal was in his locker over in the stables.

After that stunt, *vino,* the Filipino foolish stuff, began to

get him. He'd never been the same since. But you couldn't fool the old soldier. Not him! The troop-commander was just totin' him around now.

No good—he wasn't no good no more.

The moisture in the washed-out eyes welled up, and a round tear plopped into the soapy dregs before him.

All the same, he could still take care of the captain, that old captain who was so busy looking after his troop he couldn't be trusted to look after his own self. Old Bayard didn't know it, but Calhoun followed him around pretty regular. He wasn't going to have any *juramentados* cutting up the captain of "L" Troop. Not him!

Calhoun wagged his head and conjured up visions of crazy Moros running amuck, killing Christians in a mad hurry to enter the Moro Paradise through a sea of blood. It certainly was lucky he'd stayed on all these years, for who else could look after the troop-commander like him?

He nodded to the remains of the second beer and gazed dreamily through the shifting crowd in the dim room until a youngster edged up to him.

"Sure I can loan you money, all you want, kid." He spread his remaining coins on the table. "He'p you'self, son," he invited, waving his hand.

"That all you got?"

"Say, do you know how long I been in this man's army? I can git all I want, son."

The recruit looked doubtfully at the old soldier, who got to his feet and placed his hand on the other's shoulder.

"It's all your'n," he said. "Ev'y cent! I've known the time when I was busted, too."

Repudiating with a careless gesture the silver and copper on the sloppy table, Calhoun adjusted his revolver behind his hip and wound his way out into the sun. His hand slipped into his breeches pocket, and he fingered the inside seam. Mess-call sounded. Would it be better to see the captain now or after dinner?

Now would be the best time.

He mounted the flight of wooden steps that led to Captain Bayard's quarters and scratched on the screen door.

"How-do, Miz Bayard," he said to the smiling lady in white muslin who came to the door. "Is the Cap'n h'yer?"

She smiled gently. "Why, good-morning, Calhoun. I haven't seen you for a long time."

"No'm," he replied with a grin. "Not since last pay-day. I expect you're not awake when I bring the horse mornin's."

"What is it, Calhoun?" asked Captain Bayard, appearing from an inner room.

The saddler shot Mrs. Bayard a quick glance, indicating that this was a time for discretion, and she took the hint.

"I was a-wonderin' if the Troop-Commander'd loan me five dollars till next pay-day?"

"No."

Calhoun looked grieved, but he wasn't. This was a monthly occurrence, and he had no fear of the result.

"Debts is debts," he said, "and I'm plumb flat after payin' whut I owed."

"Do you know you have five previous convictions hanging over you, and the next one will finish you?"

"The Troop-Commander's sure right, but one of them's outlawed this week, and anyways I ain't lookin' for no bob-tail."

The captain seemed distantly reflective as he looked steadily at the soldier.

"The next time you get drunk you go before a General Court," he said, clipping his words, "and I wash my hands of you. I want you to get that, Calhoun."

"I know, suh; I ain't hankerin' to go back to the States in no brig. Will the Troop-Commander loan me five dollars till pay-day?"

Captain Bayard frowned and drew from his pocket the ten-peso note Calhoun had given him earlier.

"Remember what I say," he warned. "The next time you get drunk, Calhoun, you and I part company for good."

"I'll be right h'yer then till the crack o' doom. The Troop-Commander can count on me."

But the officer had turned back into the house, and the saddler went down the steps whistling and rubbing the bill in his pocket between a thumb and a forefinger. As he turned up the blazing street he heard Mrs. Bayard laugh, and he grinned too.

Captain was right; wouldn't do to get drunk again. It sure was running it on the Old Man to get tanked up every pay-day. And sometime he'd mean what he just said. That old Bayard was some buzz saw when he got worked up. One drink at the Chino's to bust the bill and that would be all.

He halted at the corner.

No! better go to chow first and get something inside, then he wouldn't be so thirsty.

His tongue slid over his lips. He turned down the side of the plaza and in a few moments found himself walking in at Sam's door. He felt a faint surprise. He had meant to go to the barracks.

" 'S all right; a little one'll settle my stummick," he assured himself and leaned across the counter. "Hard liquor," he ordered, confidentially.

Musical sounds came to Calhoun from a great distance, like the tolling of a far-off bell. He was sprawled over the messy table in the corner, head on arms.

Whut wuzzat? Bellss?

With difficulty he opened one eye and stared about. Hazy forms were moving here and there, making for the door.

Bellss?

The music began again, seeming to be closer, and he tried to listen, but his heavy head dropped down to his arms.

Bugle—thass whut. Well, he didn't have to go to stables. Anyways he was too sleepy.

He dozed, and woke suddenly.

But if he didn't go the captain would know he was drunk again. Better go, and the captain wouldn't find out. Hell! It didn't make no difference. That old Bayard never meant what he said, not with old Calhoun, not with the old saddler. Sun was too hot anyways.

But the captain! Who'd look out for him?

Calhoun struggled to a sitting position and pushed the table away. It fell over with a crash.

Nobody to take care of Bayard but him. *Juramentados* were bad medicine. They come like greased lightning. Nobody never could tell. Must keep eye on Old Man Bayard.

The saddler swayed to his feet.

Gotta watch him. Damn' fool never watch out for hisself.

The glare outside hurt his eyes, and he squeezed them shut. The sun made him dizzy, and he leaned against the plastered wall from which the yellow paint was scaling. When the whirl in his head became less confusing he staggered toward the main gate.

"Corporal of the guard!" yelled the sentry.

"Shet up, you fool kid," mumbled Calhoun, "don' you see I'm in a hurry?"

"All right," said the corporal. "He's going home. Beat it, old-timer."

Calhoun reeled. "I'm in a hell of a hurry," he explained, trying to make out who the non-com was. "It's thisaway. I gotta git to. . . ."

"Beat it, then," ordered the corporal. "Your officer will be along in a minute."

Calhoun nodded as if he thoroughly understood and steered himself through the wooden arch of the old gate, looking owlishly at the Vigilante in his red fez and sneering at the archaic, long-barreled musket.

Captain not through yet. All right; take care of him on the way back. Must get to stables now; and captain not find out how rotten drunk, paralyzed, thass whut, too damn bad, made mistake, last time, this last time. . . .

He zigzagged up the dusty road, now on the edge of the grass-filled ditch, now almost colliding with the smooth boles of curving palms. Everything was a blur of green and yellow sunlight. Halfway between the gate and the corner of the wall beyond which the nipa roofs of the horse-shelters could be seen Calhoun became vaguely aware of footsteps

behind him. He turned with a lurch and faced Captain Bayard. In an effort to appear serious he scowled at the troop-commander; but at the straight look in the dark eyes Calhoun's uncertain gaze wandered, and he drew the back of his hand over loose lips. A feeling of shame made him uncomfortable. He tried to straighten up.

"I can't carry you any longer."

The captain's tone bit into the soldier's wobbling brain. And something of regret, of deeply felt distress, in that voice sent through the saddler's toughened nerves a wave of strange and disturbing fear.

"You're through!"

Calhoun peered at the officer to see what his eyes looked like, but the captain's face danced jerkily.

"I'm h'yer, ain't I?" muttered the saddler. "I'm a-goin' to my dooty, ain't. . . ."

He wondered if he had them for sure this time. Had the booze got him at last? What were these devils on his trail? Was he seeing things? Them eyes. . . .

"Get to your quarters!" snapped the troop-commander.

From the long grass in the ditch behind the officer wild, brown eyes, white-circled, glared at them. Then a dark shaven head rose out of the green, a head that was two heads, queerly mixed. Calhoun shut one eye to see if they were real.

The jim-jams!

"You heard me, Calhoun! Step out!"

The soldier's musty brain clutched at the meaning of those wavering heads. If they were real. . . .

His bloodshot eyes opened wider.

A yell came from the sentry at the gate down the road. The guard poured out and dashed toward the group of three, but it was impossible to fire, so close together were Captain Bayard, Calhoun, and the rushing Moro.

On hearing the yell the captain turned, shrank back, and pulled at his revolver; but the *juramentado,* as silent, stealthy, and sudden as a leopard, was upon him.

Captain Bayard was too late.

From the right and from the left slashed the wide steel of the barong, and the officer's gun was discharged into the dirt at his feet.

The cloud in Calhoun's brain partly cleared; he had got out his revolver, but it wobbled and his shots went wild.

The barong cut again and again, this way and that.

Captain Bayard was a red heap on the ground, twitching.

Calhoun's lower lip sagged as understanding came. He was aware, as in a fog, of crazy eyes, of a dripping, swinging blade. He did not feel it cut through his arm, nor did he note the gush of blood from the severed artery in his thigh. His mind, such as it was, and his eyes were full of that old comrade on the ground. He had ceased to bother about the Moro.

Revolvers spat all around him. Men in khaki, arriving on the run from the gate and from the stables, moved violently across his fixed stare.

Then suddenly the greased and filthy, almost naked Moro lay twisting and snarling on the ground beside the quiet troop-commander.

One final shot and the Moro was quiet too.

Some one seized Calhoun's arm, but he jerked away, and then everything went black. . . .

The saddler's eyes opened on the smeared, dusty, gaping body of Captain Bayard. His gaze followed the litter-bearers as they moved away with the dead officer. He tried to sit up.

"Keep still," snapped the surgeon, intent on his tourniquet. "You've lost a lot of blood. You'll come round if you lie still and don't talk."

But Calhoun plucked feebly at the starry field of the blue ribbon on his shirt.

"Listen!" he said, his voice faint, his bleared eyes large and sunken. "Listen!"

"Well, what is it?"

"He says to me, 'Part comp'ny,' he says. 'Part comp'ny fer good'!"

THAT FIRST FINE CARELESS RAPTURE *

By GEORGE THORP RAYNER

PHŒBE sat very still in the corner of the green moire love seat in the bay window, still with that complete, overwhelming happiness that is like a warm drench of sunlight flooding through one; only more electric than that, she thought, more like sunlight with tiny needles in it.

It was her party, the christening of the new apartment. She saw the room in a glow of realization: the cream walls with the Picasso print and the crimson Mandarin coat, the little Jacobean coffee table and the Voltaire chair, the bright yellow breakfast nook with the tiny cactus plant in a lacquer bowl, the Toile de Jouy curtains that she had spent most of last week's pay on, and the Colonial windows through which you could see Washington Square.

"But you see," Dion was saying, his brown eyes alive with ardor, "America should be proud of us. We're going to do the real, the vital things. But she doesn't seem to care. She doesn't care about the people who are going to paint her great pictures or write her great novels. The great American novel will probably be written in a hall bedroom!"

He looked around at the rest of them and found his enthusiasm mirrored in their eyes. Why, he had taken the very words out of their mouths! They thought, lovingly, of the great pictures and the great American novels that were reposing uncompleted at that very moment in their own hall bedrooms.

"But one can't gamble on an unknown quantity," Mr. Hen-

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derson said slowly, a little uncomfortable amongst all this youthful genius. Phœbe looked at him with commiserating sympathy. He was sitting next door to her on the love seat, the creases in his tuxedo trousers looking absurdly like a miniature railroad track running down into his shoes. His forehead was very shiny. She should have explained that the party was to be quite informal. Poor Mr. Henderson—he only worked in a bank! These people weren't really his people. He wasn't "artistic."

Then she remembered, guiltily, that she worked in a bank, too. It was the bank that had helped her out of a furnished room with a battered electric grill and a bed with a broken spring into this adorable two-room apartment with a bathroom done in green tile. She hoped every one had admired that bathroom!

"Di's right, I think," Phœbe said, her eyes brightly upon his curly black head, "America owes you all so much!" She saw Mr. Henderson's thin lips curling ever so slightly. She turned to him, her voice shaking. "Why, you should read Dion's novel!" Then she remembered that only two chapters were completed so far; perhaps he didn't want her to speak of it.

"It's so beautifully done," she said. "It's—it's—" They were all looking at her. She was only an outsider; what could *she* have to say? "I remember that bit, 'her humid lips, upraised to his'— That was awfully good."

Dion, who had been sitting on a pillow on the floor, stiffened suddenly, the knuckles of his clasped hands going white. "Oh, shouldn't I have—" She stopped, her words caught in consternation. She realized, then, that it wasn't his novel, but that confession story he had written to get some ready cash. "Oh!" she cried, "I—I'm sorry!"

She was aware, achingly, of being on the outside looking in. She didn't write novels, or poetry or study at the Art Students' League; she was only a bank clerk, and a rather important one, which was worse. But she'd always wanted an apartment, where she could gather all these charming

people around her and offer them cocktails and initialed cigarettes. She had felt that even if she couldn't write or paint, perhaps by just listening quietly she could garner something of their charm, their aliveness—share in the ecstasy of their adventure.

Mr. Henderson coughed discreetly into her ear. "I think, Miss Martin, that I'd better be running along. I've a heavy day ahead of me to-morrow."

Her smile faded a little and she remembered that to-morrow was the last of the month and that she would have to stay overtime, too. Phœbe walked with him across the room and into the tiny foyer, her slim green-clad figure that of a rather tired but still happy dryad. An auburn-haired dryad with wide gray eyes. She looked up at him, at his firm masculine face and his eyebrows that always bristled upward as if they were angry, and wondered if he were going to kiss her, and wondered if she wanted him to.

But his eyes seemed only to see ledgers and statements and adding machines columning incredible figures. Poor Mr. Henderson, almost thirty-five, practically middle-aged. "These youngsters," he said, his lips beginning to curl again. "They don't know what a full day's work is!"

A thin anger warmed her cheeks. Why, these were *her* friends, *her* people! "But they're going to do very beautiful things—some day! And we—we're only automatons. Who'll ever remember us?"

He looked back into the living room. Her eyes, following his, saw Dion seated at the piano playing one of those sentimental Gay Nineties ditties and watched Inez Clarey, a pillow stuffed into her dress and her hair pulled forward on the top of her head, doing her famous Gibson Girl burlesque. The rest of them were sitting around on the floor, their cigarette ends like sleepy fireflies in the lamplit dusk.

"Who'll ever *want* to remember them?" Mr. Henderson was saying.

She walked back into the room, her gray eyes very bright. Inez had by now started in on the naughty part of her bur-

lesque. Phœbe nestled down on a cushion next to Dion's and she felt his hand—warm and soft instead of cold and firm like Mr. Henderson's—slip over her hand. And immediately, as if the very touch of his hand were enough, the tingling ecstasy crept back into her thoughts on dancing feet.

"Give me a cigarette, Di!" she whispered.

He passed her his case inattentively. Phœbe joined in the fun with the crowd, laughing at the right times, but inside she was beginning to feel heavy and inert again, just as if she had been to Childs' and eaten sinkers for a two-o'clock breakfast. She wished that she could get up and do something, too. Why must she always be like a not very bright child who sits in the corner with his hands in his lap? She wondered if they didn't rather despise her, if, after all, they thought she was trying to butt in.

At three o'clock the party began to show signs of ending. Maurice and Lou were nodding on the love seat; some one had fallen asleep under the table in the breakfast nook.

Phœbe and Dion stood for a moment in the foyer saying good night while the rest of the gang waited downstairs. She looked up at him, an absurd fear balancing her ecstasy. She didn't really know of what she was afraid; perhaps of losing him because she wasn't quite keen enough—oh, why hadn't she Di's carefreeness?

"I'm sorry—" she began, "about—about what I said."

"Oh," he said, "I didn't mind. Only I'd quite forgotten I'd ever written a confession story." He looked at her suddenly, and a funny, wiggly smile twirked his lips. "Besides," he said, "I love you!"

Phœbe stood at the door and watched Di and the rest of them troop downstairs and out into the night. Then she walked slowly back into the room, collected the ash trays and emptied them into the brand-new white enamel garbage pail in the kitchenette.

After she had turned off the lamps and slipped under the covers and felt the pillow smooth and cool against her hot

cheek she knew that she wouldn't be able to sleep. Thoughts, like little imps playing leap-frog, tossed themselves about in her mind. She thought dutifully of the statements that would have to be gotten out at the bank to-morrow; she could hear the clack-clack of the bookkeeping machines, could feel her fingers limp and anxious against the keys. Oh, why did one have to work?

Phœbe sat up in bed clasping her slim pajama-clad knees and stared at the pale wan blur of the windows at the other end of the room. She thought, now, of Dion—of Dion in dungarees and a blue sweater as she had first seen him in Provincetown last summer with the gang. She could never quite isolate Dion from the gang; he was so integral a part of it.

Phœbe had never known there could be anything like Provincetown. She had grown up in one of those sparse suburban communities that are little more than names on a time table; rows of houses with imitation lace curtains at the windows and velour davenports in the parlors. She had gone to high school and then to business college with girls whose diminutive minds circled always about the boy friend, the corner movies, and getting a wave twice a week.

She supposed that all girls must be like that and that all the boys thought of nothing but taking you up to the Croton Dam in the "boiler." Then, after her mother had died and her father had married again and she had come to New York and found a place in the bank, she found that the girls with whom she worked thought of the same things, only in more sophisticated terms.

But Provincetown! Quite by accident she had discovered it. Zoe Clark, who worked in the little lending library near the bank, and who had become Phœbe's confidante, had asked her to come up to "the shack" for her two weeks' vacation. And Phœbe, terribly lonely, terribly eager for friends, jumped at the chance. She went, expecting to find a conventional seaside resort with a merry-go-round, roller-coasters and a dance hall.

Instead she found a village lost in time, a village that smelled of the sea. Zoe's shack perched precariously over the beach, a ramshackle hut with crimson curtains at the windows and a brass knocker on the door. Inside there were two beds, an old Franklin stove, a kitchen table painted bright green and a whale-oil lamp. Zoe seemed to know the whole colony; they came trooping into her place for informal parties—youngsters with sun-bleached hair and the smell of linseed oil about them. Tremendously vital they seemed to a Phœbe drunk with this new joy of living.

And Dion—he was doing bits with the Wharf Players, and had been put out of his rooming house for painting murals in the bathroom. He told Phœbe that she looked like a girl by Marie Laurencin.

She remembered Commercial Street with its green and yellow shuttered windows and its sagging fences; she remembered eating at Nelly's with the crowd and going out to the beach in some one's battered old Ford. She remembered sunrises on the dunes and fish nets silver with brine spread out over the meadows—church spires in the sun—walking bare-legged with the gang along the beach—roasting frankfurters on a driftwood fire—

And Dion, telling her that she was like a girl by Marie Laurencin; Dion holding her hand; Dion's lips, warm upon hers, Dion—Dion!

In May they were married. Dion brought her a corsage of orchids; the gang tendered them a wedding breakfast at the Brevoort and the girls at the bank gave them a cut glass cream and sugar set.

And then, because they didn't have enough money for a honeymoon—besides, they were going to Provincetown again on Phœbe's vacation—they came back to the apartment; Dion brought over his other suit and his typewriter and the half bottle of champagne that had been left from the wedding breakfast, and they were ready to settle down.

Phœbe helped him unpack, infinite tenderness in her fingertips as she lifted the few meager shirts and ties and socks—

gracious, but they needed darning!—from the worn leather grip.

"I haven't very much to offer you," he said with a wounded sort of pride. His lips kept twitching at the corners.

She looked up from where she knelt, little sticks of pain in her arms. "Nothing, Di, but your genius!" She was glad she had remembered to say that; she had been treasuring it up. "And you," she added, humming it as though it were a gay sort of tune, "just you!"

"You sound like a musical comedy ingenue!" He laughed at her, all the humility gone now.

"Yes," she said, "I'd make a good one, wouldn't I?" She snapped her fingers provocatively and continued on with the tune, improvising as she went—but a tear overflowed and spilled on the front of her new china-blue silk dress.

Dion dropped at her side, his arms about her with a strength that made her gasp.

"I feel so preposterously happy!" she said in a tremulous whisper. "Just like the heroines of popular fiction do, just exactly that way, Di! Isn't it funny how banal we become just at the wrong time? How sentimental and drippy and everything? I can see Maurice sneering at me from over a copy of Aldous Huxley and the rest of the gang laughing up their sleeves—and—but life is beautiful, sometimes, isn't it, Di?"

"And what am I?" he was saying. "Nothing but a maybe—not even a hack writer, who at least could bring in the bread and butter! Why should I ask you to gamble on me? But then I wanted you so much, Phœbe; you're such an essential part of me, now. I couldn't let you go."

She'd been so afraid he'd talk like that. Hurriedly, trying to divert him, she held up a pair of socks.

"Are these mates, Di?" she asked him.

"I ought to go out and get a job to-morrow—somehow, somewhere—"

"Di! Di!" She got to her feet and pulled him up with her. "But you haven't seen our apple tree! A real apple tree—think of that, Di!"

They walked downstairs and out into the spring dusk and looked at the slim fragment of moon through the dusty old boughs. A black cat, frightened out of its snooze on the fence, jumped down into the Clancy ash barrel and upset the tin cover. Mrs. Clancy, who was the janitress and who lived in the basement, stuck her head out of the kitchen window.

"Oh, it's you, Miss Martin! Home a little early this evenin'?"

"Why—" Phœbe said, "I've just been married! I want you to meet my husband, Mrs. Clancy!"

"Lordy!" she said. "I didn't know you was plannin' on it so soon!" She squinted at him nearsightedly, "Does he work in the bank, too?"

"No!" Phœbe said, a tremendous pride in her voice. "He's a writer!"

But Mrs. Clancy had lived in Greenwich Village too long to be thrilled by that; there were too many unpaid rent bills fresh in her memory.

"Oh," she said. "One of them!" And she shut the window.

But the sarcasm of a hundred Mrs. Clancys was unavailing now. Phœbe had at last discovered the great adventure. She had discovered it more completely than any one had ever done before, of that she was quite sure.

Sometimes, at the bank, she would look at the other girls and smile her secret smile; sometimes she was almost glad that she could pity them. Their bright-colored frocks, their "dinner rings," their new spring coats gave her only the briefest twinge of envy.

Her days were busier now, filled with a hundred and one new adjustments to life. There was the budget to live up to—although Phœbe never seemed quite able to keep within its limits, and a few days before pay day usually found them subsisting on beans and potato salad. But then on pay day they always had steak and mushrooms and butterscotch pie.

Dion's novel was practically completed. Phœbe came home from the bank to find him still working, with his typewriter on the little Jacobean coffee table and wads of paper strewn lavishly over the floor and cigarette butts littering the ash trays. She had had to bawl him out once, though, for putting them in the cactus plant.

And then in the evenings they would go out for a walk in the park, or for a ride on the top of a bus, and they would look at the stars and hold hands and talk about the future in those delicious phrases which seemed always to start off with "if" or "when" or "sometime." Or perhaps —and this grew to be more and more the case— one of the gang would be throwing a party and of course they would have to go, although Phœbe always arose resolutely to depart at twelve-thirty, tugging a grumbling Dion after her. For in the back of her mind there was always that inevitable specter, the alarm clock. Dion could sleep late in the mornings, as he usually did, but Phœbe's day started promptly at seven-thirty, and, as she always liked to get Di's breakfast ready, it meant quick stepping. Not that she begrudged Dion his leisure. His work was so much the more important, so much more brilliant, so much more difficult. Hers was only a mechanism, a routine—even if it did bring in fifty-five a week.

"But," as she had explained to Mr. Henderson, "that is just an example of the false values that go to make up our American life to-day!" Although she didn't explain that that was what Di had said himself.

Yet after Dion's novel had started its trips back and forth to the publishers, and after they had had a few months of trying to stretch a budget that just wouldn't stretch; the first roseate glow of married life seemed to fade a little and grow slightly threadbare at the edges.

Di's novel came back with depressing regularity, and he didn't seem to write very much any more and he would never show Phœbe what he had written. One day he told her that he guessed he wasn't the sort of fellow who should

have gotten married—and she had agreed with him. Then he had gone out and slammed the door behind him and stayed out until midnight and she had sat by the clock with clenched hands and aching eyes, envisioning him drunk in some tenement hallway. Finally he had come back with a pint of ice-cream as a peace offering—he had borrowed half a dollar from her that afternoon.

Summer was advancing on the little apartment, and the Toile de Jouy curtains—they were not quite so fresh looking now—hung straight and lifeless at the windows, and at night you could smell people's dinners cooking.

It was Friday night and Phoebe was sitting on the love seat apportioning out the contents of an all-too-small pay envelope. Rent, the grocer—item by item the crisp bills grew less in number. Finally she held up a lone five-dollar bill; all that they had between them until the next pay day, which, incidentally, was the start of her vacation, the vacation that was to have been a honeymoon. She looked up from the bills and saw Provincetown vanishing into irrevocable distance.

"Oh, Di!" She looked at him; he was all blurry and seemed to be merging with the Voltaire chair. Bravely she tried to smile, but it was a stumbling smile that fell down at the corners.

He got up and went over to the window and stood looking out into the summer night. He looked so Byronic when he stood that way.

"It's no use," he said. "It's all been a fool's paradise."

"But that's so trite, Di," she said, still brave. Although it was so hard to be brave when all they had had for dinner had been potato chips and a chocolate cake she had made which had flopped in the middle.

"It's so darn true!" He wheeled around and his eyes were bright and rather terrible. She knew that when he looked like that there wasn't anything you could say. At the bank, sometimes, she thought of him, sitting there alone,

just thinking, and waiting for his novel to come back. She knew how those hours must drag along on leaden feet. He was beginning to think that he was a failure. Oh, she could see it in his eyes! How she'd fought for him in her own thoughts; how she'd damned editors for refusing his novel! But she wouldn't let him go out and get a job—that could only have meant failure, definite, decisive.

"Why didn't you kick me out long ago?" he was asking in a perilously high voice. "Can't you see I'm a blowout? Don't you see I'm never going to amount to anything?"

"Oh, Di! Di!" She went over to him; she was frightened to see how pale and gray his face was.

"I'll get a job!" he cried.

"You musn't, Di!" She put her fingers over her lips to keep them steady. "You can stay on here just this way—" Then she realized that she had said something terribly wrong.

"No! No more of your charity! That's all it was. Just a luxury for you. You practically said so then. Just like some women keep poodle dogs."

Something was burning inside her and sending shafts of flame up into her throat. "And so you call all the sacrifices I've made for you a luxury! You think that's all my love amounts to!" An intolerable bitterness settled upon her; there was a numbness in her fingertips, little cold weights on her eyes. Dully, she said, "Well, Di, if you want to, you can go."

"I'm going!" he shouted. "I'm going and I'm never coming back!" He went over to the closet and got his shabby grip, opened the writing-desk drawers and took out shirts and socks, got his extra shoes from behind the piano.

She got up and walked toward him on feet that felt like pincushions full of pins. Was it all going to end—like this?

"You can sell my typewriter! I won't need it any more!"

"How can I? It's got a key missing and it was second-hand to begin with."

"I'll send you money. I'll get a job. I'll be a longshoreman, or something."

And he went. She leaned against the door, her palms outward on the warm, moist wood, and heard his footsteps stomping away into the distance.

She let down the Murphy bed and lay down. She closed her hot, stinging eyes, and tried to sleep. Of course, to-morrow he would come back; yes, of course he would come back, and they could start all over again, and his novel would surely be accepted—but where would he go to-night? He didn't have any money. Perhaps he would sleep on a bench in Washington Square and get arrested. But no, no, of course not! He'd go to his friends, the gang, and they'd take him back! They'd always bemoaned her taking him away—and now they had him again!

Phœbe sat up suddenly, her face very white. "Oh, God," she prayed, "send him back!" Because she couldn't go on without Dion; there was simply no going on unless it were with him. No more breakfasts to get for him, no more rides on the top of a bus; she'd never have to pick up his pajamas that he'd left on the floor and put them away for him. Life had suddenly fallen about her in fragments. There wasn't any use living any more—

Then she remembered that she had forgotten to set the alarm for to-morrow morning.

But he didn't come back the next day, nor the next. Phœbe heard that he was staying with Maurice down in Minetta Lane. She couldn't call him up for Maurice didn't have a telephone, and she wouldn't write. Much as she wanted him to come back she could not bend her stubborn small-town pride enough to go begging for him. Better to die of a broken heart than try to get him back.

Mr. Henderson, who had always seemed to have a place in the outer fringes of Phœbe's consciousness, became an unexpected confidant. There was no one else in whom she could confide for Zoe was in Provincetown now. They lunched together several times in the next week and Phœbe wept over her lunch and told him the whole story. Mr. Henderson, who was a cashier and well used to diplomatic

persuasion, suggested that Phœbe accompany him for her vacation to Atlantic City, where his aunt had a place. She agreed, although she wondered how his vacation happened to coincide with hers.

She could not have borne to stay on at the apartment during those long two weeks. Even Atlantic City would be preferable. And as long as she was going to continue to live—although she wasn't quite sure that she wanted to—she would have to do something. There would have to be some escape.

So on Saturday morning she started to pack. She knelt by the side of her opened suitcase, averting her face so that the tears wouldn't spot the neatly folded lingerie, and smoothed out her few good dresses. She thought of Atlantic City as a doomed murderer might think of the electric chair, or perhaps—she modified that somewhat—as a prisoner might face life imprisonment. Then she wondered, suddenly, if that might be what this were going to lead to. Then she remembered that at Atlantic City one might be carried off by the surf and never be found again, and a new resolution brightened her eyes. She almost managed to smile—a dolorous, tragic smile.

The doorbell rang sharply—but before her hopes had had time to soar she heard the brief note of the postman's whistle. Probably that was Di's novel back again. She stooped to the suitcase, feeling very limp.

Then, suddenly, she heard footsteps on the stairs that sounded like some one coming up two steps at a time. She looked up, a tremendous, choking hope in her throat. The door burst inward.

"Di!" She tried to get up but her knees wouldn't work. She could just sit there helplessly, her arms outstretched. "Oh, Di!"

"Look!" He stood before her, his hair on end, a thin slip of green paper in his hand. "A check for five hundred dollars!" That was all he could say; he was all out of breath, but his eyes were eloquent.

"Every morning," he panted, "I followed the postman to the door thinking that this check would arrive—that is after I knew my story was accepted, and besides I had to get it before I could come back to you."

She went over to him and flung her arms about him, a strange singing in her heart. "I knew you'd do it!" she cried, "I knew you'd make good! Is this the first payment?"

"Oh, no!" He looked at her for a moment, mutely. "This isn't for my novel. This is a confession novelette I did, that you didn't know about."

"Oh, Di!" But the singing was still going on; it wouldn't stop now.

"They want me to do some more! And now, Phœbe, we can go to Provincetown! We can have our honeymoon!"

"It's so grand and glorious! But, Di, you don't know how I worried about you. I was afraid you might sleep on a park bench and get arrested or something. And it would all have been my fault."

"But it wasn't, darling. You did just the right thing. Made me come to my senses."

The doorbell rang again, two sharp businesslike rings. Di ran to the door and peered down into the lower hall. "It looks like a traveling salesman with his bag," he called back. "Shall I tell him you don't want anything to-day?"

"Oh." She ran to the door, guilt in her eyes. She leaned over the rail. There was Mr. Henderson, bag in hand, looking upward, his eyebrows like grotesque question points.

Poor Mr. Henderson! Phœbe, in her own happiness, almost felt sorry for him as he stood there.

"But Di's come back!" she cried. "I can't go now!"

He kept on looking up, his mouth open. Then his shoulders slumped, and he turned to go. He looked back for a moment, vindictive. "Well," he said, "perhaps, next time—"

She leaned over the rail again. "There isn't going to be any next time," she shouted. "There isn't going to be any next time—ever!"

NEGRO AUTHORS MUST EAT*

By GEORGE W. JACOBS

NOT long ago a Negro author addressed an audience of which I was a member. For no reason beyond the possible squeamishness of his own conscience, he apologized for certain unwholesome nuances in one of his latest works; and in doing so he uttered these three words: "Authors must eat."

My mind drifted back to the childhood of man. I gazed upon a hairy fellow poised upon a crag, playing a lute. Unconscious of an audience, oblivious of possible audiences, he played. For the moment he was enchanted by the sublime fact of nature. Suddenly the fellow stopped, leaped from the crag, and with his lute tucked under an arm raced toward a glade in the jungle where a dinosaur had just been slain. As the hunters hacked away at their respective portions of the kill, the lutist struck up a wanton tune that he had heard in a certain fancy cave. One of the hunters winked at him knowingly; then tossed him a luscious dinosaur ear. When the lutist had eaten, he trudged away in the direction of his crag. From time to time he held his lute up before his eyes, focusing upon it a gaze both apologetic and caressing. Finally he said in a tone of resignation not untinged with remorse: "Oh well, lutists must eat."

In spite of the efforts of the lecturer I remained unconvinced that even the Negro author is justified in burdening his interpretation of nature with the servilities of a steward. Other men have shunted the burden of their support into channels separate from their art. Æschylus was a soldier and public official. Sophocles was a general and the com-

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mander of a fleet. Cervantes was a naval commissary and tax collector. Art to them was more than a mere purveyor of groceries. "The literature of a people," wrote Lowell, "should be the record of its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and its shortcomings, its wisdom and its folly, the confidant of its soul."

One of the opportunities which presented itself to the Negro writer at the close of the late war was that of destroying the racial stereotypes, the perpetuation of which now precludes the possibility of any immediate "literature of a people." Ten years ago the passion for a candid and comprehensive delineation of every phase of Negro life was such that the literate world clamored for the Negro of artistic ability as it had clamored at no previous time since the emancipation of the race. In response to those clamors, the Negro writers of New York, to whom I shall confine this discussion, plunged beneath the surface of their environment; they hoisted the sewer system to one's very nose and, amid the jingling of many shekels, insisted that this was all that there was of black Harlem.

Almost from the beginning certain white writers saw in the Negro writers' efforts to respond to these demands a politer form of amusement than that afforded by any of the Harlem night clubs. They trekked up to Harlem to show the little colored boys and girls the path to Parnassus; they redefined "the literature of a people" as "the record of a people's shortcomings and its follies." However, now that the clamors have become less insistent, one discovers with more regret than surprise that those Negro writers who had the privilege of being patronized along the way to Parnassus have ebbed with the tide of interest. Many of them had passionately and honestly sought escape through art. They found new shackles in artistic patronage. The public ceased to accept the summary disposal of two hundred thousand Harlem Negroes in the words: idiotic, amoral, hypersexual.

The present Negro fiction writers of Harlem fall into two general types. One type subscribes unapologetically to the

sensational. The other type subscribes no less unapologetically to a solitary contemplation of a black savage dropped bodily into a white culture. The prostitute is the high priestess of the first type. Negro primitivism is the creed of the second. Extremists both.

Harry Hansen in reviewing Maxwell Bodenheim's *Georgie May* objected to the chief character on the ground that prostitutes as a whole are so free from inhibitions or nuances that their portrayal is unworthy of a writer capable of describing complex characters. There is merit in that criticism. Nevertheless, even among the Georgie Mays there are many individuals who, despite their flouting of conventional morality, possess personal codes of ethics, anti-social though they may be, which present a fascinating bundle of contradictions. If I object, then, to the rôle that the prostitute plays in latter-day fiction by Negroes, it is not on the ground that she lacks complexity of character, but on the ground that she is portrayed out of the depths of ignorance. She is, with scarce an exception, endowed with a physical hideousness, born of the ancient superstition that only the good should be presented as beautiful. She is endowed with a bestiality possible only to the vulgar rich.

Regarding the second type of Harlem fiction, this cult, like the harlotesque, was born along the path to Parnassus. One of the white apostles of the bizarre had chanced to see an "over-ginned" Negro girl "get loose" in a Harlem Honky Tonk. "What perfect abandon! How delightfully primitive!" that apostle had exclaimed. Once in Buffalo I saw a white woman similarly alcoholic and similarly voluptuous in her dancing. Somehow it never occurred to me that the woman might be anything other than pathetically drunk. This is no rash dismissal of all the primitivists as frauds. No doubt many of them are sincere. However, one does not go to pre-Druid England to delineate a Broadway character of English descent. Why, then, this insistence on returning to Africa to understand the Harlem black? I am not unmindful of the centuries which separate the white from pre-Druid England. I simply remind the reader that to-day,

granted the same environmental conditions, the Harlem black and the Broadway white fit not dissimilarly into the mold of our mechanized American culture. This preoccupation with the primitive, therefore, belongs more properly to the fields of anthropology and archeology than to fiction. It no more interprets Harlem than it does Broadway.

The sort of perspective I am advocating does not pay immediate dividends on the American mart. We must look for the Negro writer who is prepared to endure the rejection of his work long enough to starve the taste for sewer sensationalism and misguided primitivism. There are two women novelists in Harlem who are delightful exceptions to the prevailing vogue. Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset have always had as their primary purpose the presentation of esthetic truth. We look cheerfully toward an increasing skill and vision in these writers; and toward novels which will augment that public in which their art has created "the willing suspension of disbelief."

The question of the immutability of the types which the Negro author is to use in portraying the lives of colored folk is of such magnitude that I am forced to consider evidence on the question. In an article in the *American Mercury* for December, 1928, by way of apology for this continuation of the stereotypes, James Weldon Johnson said: "It would be straining the credulity of white America to the breaking-point for a Negro writer to put out a novel dealing with the wealthy class of colored people." He continues: "American Negroes as heroes form no part of white America's concept of the race." Again, he says: "So that whenever an Aframerican writer addresses himself to white America and attempts to break away from or break through these conventions and limitations, he makes more than an ordinary demand upon his literary skill and power."

Granted. But tell me, of what use are creative powers that cannot meet this demand? A Flaubert could choose and reject, choose and reject, until he found the precise, the only word to express his exact meaning. An Ibsen could revise

a play again and again until he achieved the perfection that his mind demanded. Are we concerned in this matter with artists—be those artists ever so embryonic—or are we concerned with plowboys who, though transplanted from clod to concrete, still plod on mentally behind their mules, remaining one with their mules, looking ever and only toward sundown, and food and beds of dry straw?

Negro authors, once they free their art of the necessity of furnishing the means of life, will drop the stereotypes into limbo with the assurance that real art will finally create in their readers a demand for honest treatment of every gradation of Negro life.

A PRINCE OF SCIENTISTS *

By ELIZABETH McNEELY KEHR

THE London dusk was fast closing in as a shabbily dressed little boy came running across the cobblestones in Jacob's Well Mews and up a flight of stairs to the rooms over the old coach-house. He was smiling happily, thinking of all he had seen that afternoon at the blacksmith shop. The clanging hammer, the gay red sparks, the terribly hot iron, his father's swift, sure motions—he could have watched for hours longer. Even the most exciting marble games with the boys in Spanish Place did not compare with the smithy.

"So here you are at last, my Michael!" His mother's voice greeted him as he came in. Mrs. Faraday had meant to be stern, but, seeing his face, she forgot her intention. The dingy, cramped little home above the stables seemed somehow always brighter when Michael came into it. "He is like sunshine," she thought to herself.

Presently she called him into the kitchen. "Here is your loaf of bread for the week, son," she said. "Be diligent and cheerful, and God will bless it for you."

Michael took the loaf thoughtfully and walked away. It was small and coarse, but it did not occur to him to complain. Though only nine, he well knew what that "bad year" of 1801 in London meant and how relieved his parents had been, with flour so high, to get the public relief ration.

A few minutes afterward his mother found him busily dividing the loaf into fourteen pieces, two for each of the seven days. She was surprised to see how exactly he cal-

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culated and how cleverly he used the knife. "Those hands," she thought, "were never meant for blacksmithing."

But surely even Michael Faraday's mother could not have imagined that one day her boy's hands, working with marvelous skill in a famous London laboratory, would show the world how to set to work one of its greatest and most mysterious forces, electricity, which was then considered fit only for pretty laboratory tricks. If she could have seen half the world's wheels turning, its cities lighted, its messages transmitted, its people carried to and fro and a myriad other needs and wants supplied because of what her son would learn about electric currents, how overwhelmed she would have been!

Michael's father was often too sick to be at the smithy. Elizabeth, Robert, and baby May, besides Michael, needed clothes and food, so he and his brother had to leave school and go to work. The year he was thirteen Michael began delivering papers for Mr. Riebau, a bookseller near by. In London then scarcely any one could afford to subscribe for a paper. Instead, each customer "rented" one just long enough to read it and returned it to the newsboy, who took it on to the next renter.

One day he came home in great excitement. "Mother, mother," he cried, "I'm to be Mr. Riebau's apprentice!" Better still, because of Michael's good service as newsboy, his father would not be charged the usual fee for the apprenticeship. It was a proud day in the Faraday household.

In the bookshop Michael learned all about binding and repairing books and papers. How tired he got, stitching, gluing, nailing and cutting! Sometimes, though, he had time to look inside the books he was handling. One morning, toiling away in the dim little shop on the clumsy *Encyclopedia Britannica,* he came across an article on "Electricity." It excited him beyond measure. Here was something worth investigating, indeed! In spite of the poor print and dry language in use in those days, Michael read book after book on this fascinating subject and in the evenings succeeded in making an electrical machine that would spark gloriously.

There were no science courses in the schools then, except in a few technical colleges. But if one knew about them, there were lectures. One winter Michael attended a series on "natural philosophy," as science was commonly called then. There he met many other young Londoners as keen about science as he was and afterwards they would meet and discuss what they had heard, and lend each other books.

Then Michael determined he would make notes on the lectures as a real scientist would.

"My handwriting will never do," he decided, and patiently taught himself a new style, with small, neat letters. "I could never show my drawings to any one," he then admitted sadly to himself. It was really frightfully discouraging. Try as he would, the instruments or pieces of apparatus the lecturer had used looked all awry and lopsided in his pictures. But a foreign artist, M. Masquerier, who lodged at Mr. Riebau's, lent him books on perspective and after many nights of practicing from models in these, Michael was able to illustrate the experiments in fine fashion.

By this time he was nineteen and had several boys working under him at the bookshop. Customers were attracted by the slender young assistant with the unusually fine manners and the intelligent mind. "Perhaps you would like to hear Sir Humphrey Davy at the Royal Institution?" one of them remarked unexpectedly one day. "You may have these four tickets if you like." Would he? Michael's face answered for him.

Sir Humphrey Davy was third in the line of great scientists who had been invited to the Royal Institution since its founding in 1800, to work on discoveries that would help Great Britain and the world. He had just been making some famous chemical experiments and all who could get seats were crowding to the Friday evening lectures to hear about them.

Sitting in the gallery right over the clock, young Michael Faraday gave scarcely a thought to the distinguished audience below him in the lecture-theater. Back and forth, back and forth his eyes traveled from the lecturer down at the front

to the notes he was taking. He had to write and sketch very fast, for as Sir Humphrey talked his hands were all the time moving deftly among the gleaming beakers and tubes, the strange-colored gases and the flickering little flames on the horseshoe-shaped table. A young man standing at his right handed him whatever he needed. "Ah," sighed Michael, enviously, "what wouldn't I give to be in that fellow's place?"

Not long afterward, when Faraday was twenty-one and a journeyman bookbinder, he took a daring step. He sent Davy his notes of those four lectures, beautifully illustrated, indexed and bound, with a letter saying how much he wished to become a scientist.

"What shall we do with him?" said Sir Humphrey, who was interested because he, too, had had to make his own way.

"Put him to washing bottles," said one of his friends.

"No, sir," said Davy, "he must have something better than that." And a few months later Michael was waked out of bed one night with word that he was wanted at the Royal Institution as assistant!

There was plenty of drudgery and some risk in young Faraday's new work. He must get everything ready for the lectures, clean and keep the instruments and collections in order and help Sir Humphrey in experiments with evil smelling gases. Moreover, in a month and a half they had four bad explosions, one of which made the young assistant unconscious where he stood. But risks and drudgery didn't bother Michael particularly. He was at last in the track of what he wanted to do.

"Well, Faraday," said Sir Humphrey one day, "pack up your bags, for we are going abroad and I shall need you to write for me." Traveling with a pass from the Emperor Napoleon, for this was in 1813 and Europe was in a state of war, they visited France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Holland. Everywhere they met great scientists and saw their work. That was Michael's university course—a better one, no doubt, than he could have had in any college of that day. When he became director of the Royal Institution laboratories in 1825, these men remembered him and became his friends.

In 1821 Michael married Sarah Barnard, daughter of one of the elders in the little church he attended.

Some say that Mrs. Faraday was the first to see her husband's demonstration of how a magnet needle and a current-carrying wire affect each other. "There they go! there they go! We have succeeded at last," cried Faraday, one Christmas morning as he danced madly about the room, when, after months of work, he saw them revolving.

This was extremely important because it pointed the way to the use of great magnets in dynamos and motors. Electricity from batteries was already known, but Faraday showed how a steady, powerful current might be obtained by rotating a coil in the "field" around a magnet. He performed 158 great experiments and wrote more than five thousand paragraphs about them.

They took years to do. He had to give up all his outside work for British manufacturers and inventors, which paid so well, and have for himself and Mrs. Faraday only the "£100 per annum, with house, coals and candles," from the Royal Institution. Other men could invent processes and machinery; it was his part, Faraday thought, to find new forces and new laws for them to work by. And so he declined many other positions and honors in order to be free for his laboratory work. He seemed, as some one said, to "smell the truth." He completed in all more than sixteen thousand experiments and gave hundreds of Friday night lectures.

During the Christmas holidays of 1827 and every year afterward for nineteen years Faraday gave lectures for children. He seemed to have a special gift for making things interesting. For example, there was his series about "The Chemical History of a Candle." He brought candle wood from the Irish bogs, candles of Russian tallow, spermaceti and bees'-wax, a candle that had lain under ocean in the wreck of the *Royal George* since 1782, one from one of the newly opened ports of Japan and one bought the day before at a cheap London shop. By the time all these and many others had been lighted on the horseshoe table, the children knew a great deal about candle making. Then off they went for a

magical hour finding out the secrets of the pretty tapering flame—its hottest part, its "chimney" of air current, why it burns but doesn't blaze, the vapors it forms and what becomes of them, and on and on until they were very deep indeed in the chemistry of air and water and gases and combustion. But though the words grew longer and the experiments more complicated, every one seemed able to follow the pleasant voice and flying fingers of their guide.

Professor Faraday did not live long after he wrote up his last experiment in 1862. The Queen had given him a little house on Hampton Court. There he wrote letters and talked with friends and in the evenings sat watching the London sunsets.

In his later life and at his death in 1867 all the world honored Faraday. He had degrees and honorary memberships not only in Great Britain but in most of the cities of Europe, even in faraway St. Petersburg and Moscow, and, we may be proud to add, in Philadelphia and Boston.

Now every day of our lives we have cause to thank him for all those experiments he made. For the secrets he discovered about electric currents are the very foundation of a world of things that are our daily necessities—automobiles and airplanes and street-cars, electric irons and cleaners and all their household cousins, telephones and telegraphs, X-rays and radios. How lucky it was for us all that Michael Faraday once had to bind an encyclopedia!

IS HONESTY ABNORMAL?*

By VICTOR FOLKE NELSON

"WHAT phase of crime and punishment do you consider most in need of intelligent publicity to-day?" I asked the late Thomas Mott Osborne one day in May, 1926, less than six months before he died. We sat in the visiting room of Auburn prison, where I was serving a five-year term.

Mr. Osborne used to visit me at rather frequent intervals when he was at home (he lived in the city of Auburn); and that day I said to him, "Mr. Osborne, I'm going to interview you—if you don't mind."

"Go ahead!" said he, with a disarming smile; and so I asked him the above question.

With a directness which revealed his complete familiarity with the problem so confusing to most people, Mr. Osborne plunged at once into the very heart of the matter and delivered himself of a characteristic paradox.

"Everywhere I go," said the former warden of Sing Sing, "I hear people talking about the 'criminal type,' or 'the nature of the criminal,' as if the criminal were a creature totally different from the rest of mankind. Books are written, lectures delivered, by pseudo-penologists, in an effort to prove that the criminal is different; that he is, as they call it, abnormal.

"Now," continued Mr. Osborne, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "I have just made a very startling discovery. It is the law-abiding citizen, and not the criminal, that is abnormal!"

"Would you mind explaining just what you mean, Mr. Osborne?" I asked.

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"Not at all; not at all," he replied. "Suppose we put it like this—not to put too fine a point upon it.

"We all of us have base, selfish cravings and desires. In spite of centuries of civilization, in spite of intensive religious or moral training, they crop up more often than we care to admit, even to ourselves. We are tempted constantly, every day of our lives, to give way to selfsh desires, to disregard the rights of our fellow men.

"As a result, however, of principles instilled into us while young, and strengthened by further training as we grow older, we have come to realize that these selfish desires must, for the good of the community, be suppressed. Our lives are the resultants, in other words, of a constant daily struggle between egotism and altruism.

"This suppression, however, is not normal; it is not natural. And so I say that the law-abiding citizen is abnormal. For to be law-abiding is strictly an acquired habit. It is not natural for a man to think of others first and himself last; it is contrary to every animal instinct that still loiters within us. Why, only a few short centuries ago the hero was the man who could plunder and steal the most food for himself and for his family. And habits thus handed down from one generation to the other, and strengthened by centuries of use, are not to be thrown off in a day, a week or a year. Our selfishness, therefore, is quite natural; while our respect for the law is artificial.

"It is in this sense that I consider the criminal a perfectly normal person. He is perfectly natural; perfectly selfish. He takes what he wants, indulges every selfish whim, with a savage disregard for the personal, property and sexual rights of his fellow men. Do you recall Wordsworth's lines *On Rob Roy's Grave?* It goes somewhat like this, unless my memory fails me:

"For why? Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them: the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power
And they should keep who can.

"And the sooner we realize this important fact, and stop wasting our time worrying about his abnormality, the sooner will we learn to cure him of his malady.

"And this brings us to the widely discussed matter of 'reforming' men," continued Mr. Osborne, while I listened intently.

"To 'reform' a man it is necessary to change his ideas, his philosophy of life, his most inward desires. Now, since even the most highly civilized men, despite centuries of culture and religious training, still continue to experience the same selfish desires as those experienced by the most hardened of ruffians, it is clearly impossible in a single lifetime, much less in a few years, to rid the criminal of desires and cravings which years of selfish indulgence have strengthened into pure egotism.

"We cannot, in other words, expect the criminal to do what we ourselves, with our wider training and culture, have been unable to do."

Somewhat perplexed to hear such seeming heterodoxy (so to speak) on the lips of the man whose name was linked so constantly with the word "reform," I ventured to ask:

"What is the solution? If reform, so-called, is out of the question, what then is to be done?"

Mr. Osborne replied:

"The solution is quite simple, when you come to think of it. How have the rest of us managed to become law-abiding? Simply by realizing the necessity of law and order and by erecting a code of morality based on that necessity. To cure the criminal of his selfishness, therefore, we must make him see the need for law and order; we must make him recognize the standards of living which keep the rest of us law-abiding. Then, and only then, may we hope to convince him of the wrongness of his selfish standards.

"Of course, this is not an easy thing to do. When even the best of us fail, daily and hourly, to live up to our standards, our own codes, is it within reason to expect that the criminal who from early boyhood has indulged his every selfish whim, can succeed where we have failed? The prob-

lem has its roots in the deeply hidden secrets of human nature and is correspondingly difficult to get at.

"There is, however, this encouraging feature about the thing." Mr. Osborne concluded. "We have at length managed to look at our problem from the proper angle. So long as we considered the criminal as a separate species, entirely different from ourselves, we were hopelessly at sea. Viewing the problem from a more correct angle, we now have the satisfaction of knowing that we are working in the right direction. And in the final analysis, it is the direction which is most important. All we need do now is to persuade the criminal to become as abnormal as we are—and the problem is solved!"

MRS. FRED STONE *

By DOROTHY C. REID

ONCE in a while we run across a real life story that tends to revive our youthful faith in fairy tales—the rich little girl marries the poor little boy and they live happily ever after. Of course, it is perfect if the boy also makes a name and money for himself.

This is the story, stripped of all detail, of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stone, those people who have done so much to keep the American stage clean and wholesome.

Mrs. Fred Stone was Allene Crater, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Crater of Denver, Colorado. As a little girl she and her sister, both vivacious, curly-haired and blonde, were the envy of other Denver children as they drove their own Shetland pony and cart through the city thoroughfares. Probably not the least envious (or admiring) was Fred Stone, who, from his position on the sidewalk, frequently watched the sisters airily driving by in their own miniature equipage. Although it was many years later that Fred Stone met Allene Crater, he never forgot the picture of those two little girls on the Denver highways.

What Mr. Crater's ambition may have been for his talented daughter, I have never heard, but certainly it was not the stage. They were regular attendants of the Baptist Church and while Mr. Crater opposed Allene's stage inclination he was proud of her really beautiful voice as she sang in church. Nor did he object to her taking the leading rôles in all the children's plays the church saw fit to produce. Church

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members shook their heads dubiously over the little Crater girl with her desire for a stage career, but they were not above letting her plan and lead their entertainments, the proceeds of which swelled the church treasury.

Allene, however, quite unconscious of their disapproval, went on her way, enjoying her singing and acting, and withal hoping. She was just thirteen when she made her stage début. It was a short-lived affair although it settled for all time the question of her career.

She knew the manager of the Denver Stock Company and easily obtained a small part. As a peasant lass, she entered a scene, the taunting mob standing back, and after a few preliminaries she consented to sing for them.

Her mother and father knew nothing of this new venture. The dutiful daughter kissed them both good-night, and, so far as they knew, went to bed. But, had they been standing at their back door, they might have seen her stealthily slip out on her way to the theater.

She was too well known in Denver to keep her secret long. Mr. Crater, lunching downtown one day, was astonished when one of his friends said, "Allene is a great little hit on the stage."

"Stage!" snapped the surprised Mr. Crater. "No child of mine is on the stage."

"Indeed?" said the communicative friend. "Well, you come over to the theater with me to-night and let's see."

It is typical of Mr. Crater that he made no scene at the dinner table that evening. He attended the theater and sure enough, as the mob drew back, his Allene walked from the wings and burst into song. Most of the audience recognized the "youngest Crater girl" and her songs were well received.

Mrs. Stone says of that momentous evening: "Immediately after the performance I left the theater intending to hurry home and slip up the back way to my room, but at the stage entrance stood my Dad! For a moment I was frightened; I knew I had been unfair and looked for merited punishment. I should have known my Dad better than that. He was never anything but gentle with his children. He took my hand in

his, and, as always, put them both in his overcoat pocket. We had a long, comfortable talk as we walked home from the theater and it was decided right then that my sister and I should go to the Female College in Chicago, finish our educations, and AFTER that was over I would be allowed to take up my musical career.

"It was while we were in Chicago that my father lost his fortune in one of those financial upheavals of the West. Soon after we left school my sister married the manager of the Denver Stock Company and I was allowed to join my brother-in-law's company. This experience was priceless. After a year of stock I was engaged as prima donna for David Henderson's Extravaganza Company in Chicago. This was my first real success and the first telegram I received after we opened was Dad's message of love and congratulations."

Mrs. Stone was prima donna with DeKoven and Smith, Oscar Hammerstein, Frank Daniels and Francis Wilson. She sang many rôles in Washington, D. C., in a musical stock company under the direction of Mr. Perry who was also stage manager for the Metropolitan Opera Company. After these well known productions, she joined "The Wizard of Oz," and for the first time met the man she married. Both were Denver people and Fred Stone immediately remembered the fair-haired driver of the pony and cart, a picture he had carried in his mind since he was a little boy. They were married in Jersey City very soon after they met.

Allene Crater Stone then stepped out of stellar rôles. She had many opportunities to star in shows that were not of Montgomery-Stone origin, but to accept them meant leaving her husband for months at a time. She could never consent to do this; she preferred to submerge her own light beneath the bushel of talent of her famous husband in order to troupe with him.

After her three gifted daughters were born—Dorothy, the lovely dancing star in "Three Cheers," then Paula, who will make her stage début next fall, and Carol, who will follow the prescribed "stepping" Stones—Mrs. Stone di-

vided her time between the children and the stage. Minor rôles were more easily carried on by an understudy and Mrs. Stone could flit in and out of these lesser parts without upsetting the cast. When she was away from home her own mother, "Mimi" as the girls affectionately call her, superintended the household and children. As the girls grew up, reaching that age when they needed the constant understanding and direction of their mother, Mrs. Stone stayed with them.

Few mothers have the ability or desire to be as companionable with their children as has Mrs. Stone. The three girls and an equal number of friends long ago called themselves the "Masked Knights." They elected Mrs. Stone to the rank of Queen Guinevere, and Fred, her husband, was King Arthur. To the outside world Allene and Fred Stone were frequently on tour with their theatrical productions; it was only the "Masked Knights" who knew that they had been banished from their castle and compelled to be traveling minstrels until the castle could be seized and the King and Queen reinstated. Maneuvers lasted as long as the Stone show was on the road; from time to time important looking documents, impressively stamped and sealed were received by the Knights. The banished King and Queen reported in detail the progress which they, disguised as traveling minstrels, were making in strategic warfare. In just a few weeks (according to these secret documents) they would be ready to return and recapture the castle. When they finally did return, it was a time of ancient revelry. A royal banquet was prepared for the King and Queen, the regalia of knighthood was brought out and refurbished; it was an evening of much merry-making. King Arthur invariably escorted his Queen down the broad stairway, his Queen in gorgeous court dress, golden hair flying and wearing the traditional crown. They walked majestically into the banquet hall where the order of "Masked Knights" splendidly accoutered, faces properly covered, stood at attention back of their chairs. In true medieval manner the Queen's health was drunk in ale and burgundy (although I am told the merest taste would have

convinced an outsider that the ale was quite gingery in flavor and the burgundy was remarkably like grape juice).

This fantastical bit of play has been superseded by more modern and possibly grown-up ideas, for the girls are older. However, I have Dorothy's word for it that life in the Stone household is always equally entertaining and delightful.

She says: "When I come home late at night, after the show, it is Mother who opens the door and leads me straight to the kitchen where she scrambles eggs, makes toast and cocoa for me. Sometimes we take our food into the dining-room, just as often we sit at the end of the kitchen table, and Mother listens eagerly to all my chatter of the theater and what happened throughout the afternoon and evening. Sometimes I stop eating and dance a few new steps, or sing a song that has just come to me. She loves it; she is the most marvelous audience!

"Last winter," she continues, "while Daddy was home recuperating, we frequently waked him up with our fun, then we would go into his room and do it all over. It would be two-thirty before we knew it and I was hustled off to bed. I could sleep late in the morning, but Mother was always up early; she starts my sisters off to school and sits through all the breakfasts that must be served in our household. And, she makes the grandest cakes! Our family would rather have Mother's cakes than any we have ever tasted. I have known her to stay in the kitchen all afternoon, baking cakes for us.

"No matter how late Mother may have returned from the theater, when we were younger, she always stayed up on Christmas Eve to trim our tree and arrange the presents in true Santa Claus fashion for us three children."

The Stone home in Forest Hills, Long Island, looks and is a real home. It is a long, low, rambling house, entirely surrounded by magnificent trees through which tiny red and gray squirrels leap and play. The gardens are veritable bowers from the earliest spring flowers to the latest hardy fall blossoms. The girls have been reared in a perfectly natural, normal manner. It is understood now that they, too, will go

on the stage, but it has not been held up to them as the career they must follow. They have attended school in Forest Hills, and when they were old enough and wanted to, started their lessons in voice and dancing.

One might feel that what with intermittent stage work, rearing a family as carefully as she has, and managing her extensive home, Mrs. Stone has had her time pretty well taken up. It seems like a fairly crowded life. She has one other self-imposed duty. Her husband has a particular aversion to having a private secretary. It takes no stretch of the imagination to visualize what secretarial duties might entail in the life of that well-known, busy man. Mrs. Stone attends to them, and now that Dorothy is singing and stepping her way across the boards of the American stage, and possibly through the films, more business passes through her hands.

According to Dorothy, Allene Crater Stone thinks first of the convenience and happiness of her family. "Honestly," she says, "I don't believe Mother ever thinks of herself. I remember one day when she was breaking a wishbone with Carol, who was a little tot at the time. She looked at Mother and said, 'Just once, won't you please wish something for yourself? Wish for something beside health and happiness for all of us.'

"Now, that's my mother for you," says Dorothy.

HIGH SCHOOL POETS *

By NELLIE B. SERGENT

IT would be interesting to trace the origins and developments of this "creative" writing which is so much the vogue at present. We teachers of the middle generation know that there was little creative work in the schools of our day and no mention of it in our first preparation for English teaching. One of its pioneers, I am convinced, was Professor John Erskine. His teaching of poetry to undergraduates at Columbia was described by Joyce Kilmer in 1914 as a thing unique. Since that time, in his graduate courses, he has preached the gospel of teaching literature through craftsmanship, to thousands of English teachers in all parts of this country.

During the last decade the work of two English schoolmasters has influenced to some extent the teaching of English in this country. Mr. H. Caldwell Cook, of the Perse School at Cambridge, has published six remarkable volumes of the writing of his pupils. In the prefaces Mr. Cook gives his theory of English teaching and a very vivid and delightful account of his own work. Much the same thing has been done by Mr. E. A. Greening Lamborn, of the East Oxford School. His *Rudiments of Criticism* is a discussion of the qualities of poetry with very definite suggestions for the teaching of verse-writing to children. Unfortunately neither of these writers is widely known here.

The book that has popularized "creative" teaching, as such,

* Reprinted from *Progressive Education* by special permission of the author and publisher. Several of the illustrative poems which were originally printed with this article, as well as a bibliography of anthologies of student verse, have been omitted here for lack of space.

is *Creative Youth,* by Professor Hughes Mearns of New York University, formerly a teacher of English at the Lincoln School, New York City. With an irresistible enthusiasm he describes his adventures at the Lincoln School, in teaching his pupils to read and to write. His method is so simple and his results (as embodied in an anthology of his pupils' poetry filling half the volume) so convincing that almost any English teacher who reads the book will be converted to his faith.

But some teachers have objected—such work can be done in colleges and in ideal schools like the Lincoln School, with the best children of the best people, but not in our great public factories with the children of the foreign-born. The teachers who say this have never tried the experiment. In making a "survey" of poetry in high schools, for the writing of this article, I have found that a great deal of excellent work has already been done; and I am very sure that I have not found all of it. My collection includes more than thirty schools, representing fifteen states. Sixteen of these schools have published volumes of verse, some of which surpass most of the private school and college anthologies that I have seen.

Indeed, I believe that we in the public schools have better "material to work with" and better conditions for fostering poets than have private school teachers. The very foreignness of our pupils is a great asset. The Irish and the Jews —to mention two nationalities numerous in New York City schools—have far older and deeper poetic traditions than have indigenous Americans. Their lives, too, in poor or middle-class homes, have been richer in human experiences—immigration, suffering, poverty, work, religion, love, death—than the sheltered lives of the children of the rich. Their reading, though by no means carefully supervised, is often of the world's great books. Moreover, in spite of school work and home duties, they have more time to grow spiritually. A teacher in a well-known private school said to me in a conversation about poets' clubs: "Our girls have no time for school activities. Of course, they all take music, dancing, and riding outside of school." The fact that we have very large numbers is another advantage. There are

sure to be more talented children among four thousand than among one or two hundred. The problems are: how to find out the talented ones, and, when found, how best to help and encourage them to develop what is in them.

Although all pupils can be taught to appreciate and enjoy poetry, not all can be taught to write it well. But all should be given an opportunity to try, for poets will spring up in the most unexpected places. It is good to begin when a class is studying verse. The suggestion that they themselves are going to write poems may be made sometime beforehand, to arouse interest. After a preliminary study of meter, figures of speech, and other qualities of poetry, the assignment may be given: "Now *you* write a poem!—for a week from to-day." During the interval before the assignment is due, poems by other high school students may be read to the class, with criticisms of each one as read. Why is it a poem? What makes it beautiful (feeling, pictures, sounds, words, pattern, etc.)? What starts a poem, anyway?

The result of the first assignment will not be particularly encouraging—about one good poem to twenty bad ones. The good ones are rejoiced over, their beauties carefully pointed out, and perhaps the suggestion made that the writers offer them to the school publications. (A great day!) The bad ones are criticized by teacher and class, and, incidentally, much of poetic technique may be taught and learned. Imperfect rhymes, faulty rhythms, trite expressions, and incongruous images, will be pointed out. The undesirability of inversions, archaic expressions (such as *did fly*), and padding for the sake of rhyme and rhythm, may be explained by the teacher. Other questions that will arise early in the game are: the difference between sentiment and sentimentality, the difference between free verse and prose, and the difference between poetry and rhymed description or rhymed moralizing. "Poetry is emotion expressed so that it arouses emotion in the reader." "Great poetry is not in the content but in the effect." Not all of these things will be brought out in one lesson, of course, but from time to time, as they are suggested by the poems. The second time the assignment is

given, the results will be much better; a few excellent poems —and you have discovered the poets in that group! After this the class may go back to the beaten path of the syllabus, but the poets will be encouraged to give you their poems whenever and wherever they wish.

The study of modern poetry offers the best opportunity for the teaching of verse-writing. Carl Sandburg's "Fog" and Rupert Brooke's "The Great Lover," both so delightful to imitate or parody, have helped many nestling poets to find their wings. The only really poor high school anthology that I have read comes from a school where Goldsmith, Milton's *Minor Poems,* and Macaulay's essays are still taught, at the expense of all modern verse and prose. In my own school we have Miss Forbes' *Modern Verse* in the fourth term and Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American and British Poetry* in the eighth term. Some of our poets begin their writing in the fourth term and are regular contributors to the school periodicals during the rest of their course. Others begin in the eighth term and do brilliant work at once.

The ideal situation, however, is a "special" class of upper-term students, in which modern verse is the chief literature studied and verse-writing the chief form of composition. There are such classes in two schools that are doing remarkable creative work—George Washington High School in New York City and the Los Angeles High School. The former school publishes a magazine, *The Lantern,* and a newspaper, *The Cherry Tree,* which have set up new standards for the high schools of New York City and elsewhere. In the Los Angeles High School, where Mrs. Snow Longley Housh has two sections of such a "special" English class, a volume of beautiful verse has been issued each year for the last four years. The work of these two schools seems to me to prove the value of these courses.

School publications, with the right standards, are a great incentive to real writing. Many schools have a magazine and a weekly newspaper, both including poetry. In some towns local newspapers run columns of verse to which the

high school students are encouraged to contribute. This has been the case for several years in Decatur, Illinois, where the poetry publications of the Decatur High School and of Millikin University are exceptionally fine. Getting their work into print is an encouragement and an inspiration to writers of all ages.

The publication of an annual or biennial anthology of verse is another great stimulus to writing. This I know from my own experience and from the score or more of such volumes now in my possession. These little books will be read and reread and, by some, cherished for a lifetime. In my school some teachers use our anthology for supplementary reading and study in the work in modern verse. This makes poetry a very real and living thing.

Working with the periodicals are the literary clubs. Here the talented students come together and have the experience and discipline of reading their work before a critical audience. Such a group will become expert critics of their own and each other's writing. The teacher in charge of the club will help out with the criticism and will guide the members in their reading. She will try to make them broad readers, not specializing in either modern poetry or classical poetry, to the exclusion of the other kind. She will try to make them discriminating readers, recognizing and choosing the best. She can also suggest to them the advantages of keeping a "commonplace book," for the preservation of the best of what they read. She can suggest readings and lectures for them to hear and plays to see and perhaps go with them sometimes to these things. In my school the Poets' Club edits and publishes the anthology—a very educating experience for all concerned with it.

Still another means of stimulating writing in schools are the poetry contests. The national contests in writing conducted annually by *The Scholastic* have had a widespread influence. At the New Trier Township High School, Winnetka, Illinois, annual prizes amounting to fifty dollars have been given for the last fifteen years by a citizen of the town, for the best compositions in story, essay, and verse.

In New York City an annual inter-high school city contest was established five years ago by Miss Ethel Ericson of Wadleigh High School. Thirty or forty schools are represented at these contests, which are undoubtedly one of the causes of the general interest in verse-writing in the high schools of this city. During the last three years anthologies of verse have been published by seven New York high schools, and several others are now in the making.

In criticizing the work of pupils, either in classes or in clubs, some famous dictums of other critics may be utilized by the teacher, thus putting the burden of authority on somebody else. One of my favorites is this: "Poetry should be sincere, sensuous, and sensible." Sincerity is essential for good poetry, although, of course, sincere poetry is not necesarily good. Sensuousness is sensitiveness to beauty in all its forms. This sensitiveness may be acquired and should be cultivated consciously by the aspiring writer. He should keep a notebook of the things that he thinks beautiful, that is, the things that cause him excitement. These notes will be raw material for poems. The third adjective in the above quotation, *sensible,* has been invaluable to me. So much of what poets write is not sensible!

Another useful dictum for critics is Michelangelo's famous epigram: "The more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows." This applies to poetry quite as well as to sculpture. Most amateur poems are too long and may sometimes be greatly improved by cutting out superfluous adjectives and adverbs, unnecessary lines, or even whole stanzas, when they add nothing to what has already been said. This first attempt, by a fifth term girl, was raised from a mediocre to a good poem by omitting the second of the two stanzas:

POETRY

Poetry, O Poetry,
Traitor that you are,
You take away the heart of me
And hang it on a star.

Poetry, O Poetry,
Do you think it fair?
But I shan't be so angry
If you'll handle it with care.

The second stanza is an anti-climax and very flat anyway, and the class decided that it should be scrapped, as the whole poem was in the really lovely first stanza.

"Write with your eye on the object," said Wordsworth. If his command were always followed, we should be spared much atrocious nature poetry. No other kind of writing lends itself so easily to insincerity and to clichés. Poems about larks (in New York City), balmy breezes, babbling brooks, and so on must be ruthlessly discouraged. When they are real, however, the nature poems written by young people are often lovely. The first one quoted here is a city girl remembering her former home in the country.

September Walk

What's the matter, Daddy,
Are you full of cares?
Let's go down the orchard way
And pick some yellow pears.

Let's explore the old trail
And watch the pheasants run;
Birch-tree leaves are fallen there
Bright as autumn sun.

Perhaps we'll find some gentians
In that swampy place;
Then we'll climb the wood-chuck hill,
Thru the Queen Anne's Lace.

The bitter-sweet is redd'ning
On the wild plum-tree;
The air is sweetly drowsy
With hum of bumble-bee.

There's a chipmunk running
On the old stone wall;
From the pine upon the hill
Comes the blue-jay's call.

Aren't you hungry, Daddy?
Vanished all your cares,
Sitting on a fallen tree
Eating yellow pears.

MARY BARRY *
Evander Childs High School, New York City

TO A RAINBOW TROUT

There you now lie—
With thoughts of others' fate numbing your brain;
A moment ago, a live thing,
Idling in the deep, wide stream,
Happy in your own place.

There you now lie—
Gasping and shuddering, tossing about,
Seeking vainly the cool waters
From which you were suddenly
Snatched by the angler.

But go you back!
Search out once more the deep and shining pools;
Again enjoy life in their depths.
Aye—you swim once more—but I,
I weary of fishing.

LEON ANDREWS †
High School, New Haven, Connecticut

Sometimes we have nature touched by fancy, as in this charming poem:

COUSIN AROON

Sunny Aroon, the Leprechaun,
(Cousin of mine and Irish born)
Heeding the soft, clear call of spring,
And knowing the world for a lovely thing,
Skipped in the valley lily bed,
Bobbing their bells with his little head.

* *The Evander Childs Anthology of Student Verse*, 1926.
† *The English Leaflet*, April, 1928.

Pausing to kiss a pansy face,
(He couldn't resist its lovely grace)
He mused as a downy bird drew near,
"My, aren't the robins fat this year!"

MARY JANE WARD*
Girls' Commercial High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

And this finely imaginative one from California:

JOURNEY'S END

Through fields of clouds that weep,
Steadily going,
Past pale white mists asleep,
The rain is blowing.

Downward and downward far,
Bewildered spaces!
To where warm green things are
Lifting their faces.

How sweet for rain to see,
After so long,
Each roof loving wetness, each tree
Wanting its song!

JOSEPHINE MILES†
Los Angeles High School

Love poems are numerous and usually bad. They are "symptoms," as Professor Erskine used to say; that is, they detail the writer's feelings without giving them a meaning. Sometimes, however, the emotion is raised to a universal level, so that the reader is made to remember his own experiences.

A SCARLET WAY

You speak of me as being always gay.
Is grief then less than grief,
When crimson handkerchiefs are used to keep
The strained and silent tears in that I weep?

* *Cardinal Notes.*
† *Anthology of Student Verse,* 1926.

Or is an autumn leaf
Less dying, though it die a scarlet way?

DOROTHY EMERSON *
High School, Morgantown, West Virginia

A DREAM

A dream, I hold it close to me—
This fairy thing that seems to be
A land of flowers—turquoise skies
A realm apart—a paradise
Set in the heart of me.
And if the wind blows snow and sleet
All down the dirty, noisy street,
Still then I only see
My dream a rose within my heart,
A sacred thing I hold apart
From the dim world and hear it say
In whispers soft, "Perhaps to-day,—
Perhaps to-day she comes."
And if the time be dull or gay,
My heart still echoes soft, "To-day,
Perhaps she comes to-day."

WESLEY LA FEVER †
Los Angeles High School

FUTILITY

Every night I talk with you:
  Exquisitely I shape each thought
  To silver words, all finely wrought,
Beauty, Poesy are there too,
Garbed in star-dust and in dew.

And you, you have not praise or blame,
  For you are far away and high,
  Clear against the midnight sky;
And even if you knew I came,
You would not answer to your name.

MURIEL HOCHDORF ‡
George Washington High School, New York City

* *Saplings*, 1927.
† *Anthology of Student Verse*, 1925.
‡ *The Cherry Tree.*

And this one in the "modern" manner:

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

According to the Fates, they say,
I'll do all the year what I do to-day
So, O my dear, I greatly fear
I'll love you through another year!

JEAN K. JOHNSTON *
Evander Childs High School, New York City

Poems about grandmothers and about children have a great variety of beauty and charm.

GRANDMOTHER

Some old people
Are like potatoes:
Mealy,
And with eyes that do not see.

My grandmother
Is like an apple:
Sparkling and keen,
With all the joy
Of the autumn of life.

RUTH BERRIEN †
High School, Bronxville, N. Y.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER

Now you need never start
At the wail of the wind on the sea.
Now you need never fret
When from your door you see

The west wind sweep the sky
And teasingly toss the cocks.
Now you need never stand
Facing the spume on the rocks.

* *The Evander Childs Anthology of Student Verse*, 1928.
† *Bronxville Schools Bulletin.*

Now you need never watch
The door for Colin's face;
Or, sighting the calm off Donegal,
Kneel for a moment's grace.

Now you'll have peace through the night,
Though Colin was last of your four;
You have always faced the light,
And the sea can hurt you no more.

Helen E. Murphy*
Evander Childs High School, New York City

And this Jewish grandfather:

Old David
(Dedicated to my grandfather)

Gone,
Like the last shriveled leaf
In sudden, sighing fall.

Gone—
So sudden it was we could not believe,
But stood like wondering children in all the masquerade
Of our worn faces; till, going out into the pale sunshine,
We saw those white bearded ancients on their trembling way to prayer,
And old David no longer at their head.

Lydia Rosoff†
James Monroe High School, New York City

These are delightful children!

The Changeling

You call me mother, but you are not my child,
With your varied moods so mad and wild,
With your swift brown eyes and your foreign ways,
And your sweet, wide mouth where the laughter strays.

* *The Evander Childs Anthology of Student Verse*, 1928.
† *Poems*, Vol. 2.

You are not my child and you flaunt it too,
You mock me so with the things you do,
You are not like me, how well I know,—
Perhaps that's why I love you so.

EDYTHE LEWIS *
High School, Williamsport, Pa.

FOR ANTOINETTE

A smear of ink on a round, pink thumb;
Antoinette is doing a sum.

Thin little arm moving busily;
"Put down seven and carry three."

Far-away look in the gray-blue eyes—
"Where does the Tiber river rise?"

Brown legs curled round the rung of the chair;
And lamplight on her bobbed brown hair. . . .

O little brown head, and eyes, gray-blue,
What will your wisdom lead you to?

EVELYN AHREND †
Scoville School, New York City

Poems about mothers and fathers are more stereotyped. But here is good psychology, from an exquisite little book:

MOTHERS

Mothers are just the queerest folks—
'Member when John went away?
All but mother cried and cried
When they said good-by that day.
She just talked and seemed to be
Not the slightest bit upset—
She was the only one who smiled;
Others' eyes were streaming wet.

* *Verse by Students.*
† *Scrapped Silver* (All the poems quoted in this article are from public high schools, except four taken from *Scrapped Silver*).

But when John came back again
On a furlough safe and sound,
With a medal for his deeds
And without a single wound,
While the rest of us hurrahed,
Laughed and joked and shouted cheers,
Mother kissed him, then she cried,
Sobbed and cried with heart-wrung tears.

JOSEPHINE HARFST *
High School, Mount Vernon, N. Y.

Poems about things are written more frequently by girls than by boys.

YELLOW CURTAINS
(A red letter day in a dull life)

I hung them up just for a day,
Frilled and ruffled, oh, so gay!
They flaunted themselves before the eyes
Of those who gazed in shocked surprise.
My house took on a rakish air,
Creaked with laughter everywhere;
I heard the stairs and hallways ring
With "ohs" and "ahs" at such a thing.

The rooms seemed touched by limpid flame,
Each object bore a gilded frame;
The cold, marred floors grew warm and bright
With silvered points of golden light;
While a yellow bird, a poor caged thing,
Lifted its sun-red throat to sing.

EDYTHE LEWIS †
High School, Williamsport, Pa.

MONDAY BLUES

All my Monday washing
Is hanging on the line
And it's I that looking at it
Feel rich and fine.

* *Poems, M. V. H. S.*
† *Poems by Students.*

Michael's new breeches
Are jumping in the breeze,
And wee Nora's rompers
With holes in their knees.

And young Peter's dresses; small
Beside his daddy's shirts.
They make me laugh and cry
And laugh until it hurts.

What matter if it rain—
But God send it shine—
So that their darling washing
Is all upon the line?

EDNA MICHAELLE SNYDER*
Scoville School, New York City

A number of very fine poems that I have seen have been suggested by poems studied in school. Some of them are too long to quote here. "Tahmineh's Grief," by Miriam Reyman of the Mount Vernon High School, gives a moving story of Sohrab's mother—her long waiting for her son's return, her receiving the news of his death, and her own death soon afterwards. "The Knight of Truth," by Floy Palmer, of the Los Angeles High School, is a new and very satisfactory version of the last days of Lancelot. Nobody, I think, had described the last moments of Lady Macbeth until this poet did it:

LADY MACBETH

An eerie whiteness through the withered trees
Had caught the tragic setness of her face,
The awful stillness of an eye that sees
Beyond the outer world, far into space;—
And then she roused herself, and o'er her lips
There played a smile of reckless bitterness
As one that from a poisoned chalice sips
And knowing, drinks the drugs with carelessness:

* *Scrapped Silver.*

"I gambled and I lost a worthless game,
But better that than not have lived at all.
The foolish moth that hovered 'round the flame
At least had felt the fire before its fall.
I gave myself to Chance, and now to Death,—
Perhaps we'll meet in Hell,—who knows—
Macbeth?"

Margaret Demorest*
High School, Williamsport, Pa.

Here is a fine appreciation of Amy Lowell:

To Amy Lowell

I can remember now
How I felt
When I first read your words.
It was like finding
Purple and white crocuses
Poking thru brown leaves of autumn
That had lingered on till spring.
Your words flash fire,
Gyrating red, blue, yellow, orange rings
And rockets flaming upward.

Then again
You are cold,
Talking of graves and such.
But I love you most
When you send cool words
Rippling along as a brook
Plays over stones at dawn,
Or as a shepherd-boy,
Lying alone upon a meadow green,
Pipes softly on an instrument of reeds.
And then the other morning
I picked up the paper
And read the queerest news.
Amy Lowell Dies, the headlines screamed.

* *Poems by Students.*

Well, I was rather taken aback,
You may believe.
But I had an idea the paper was in error—
You know how they do confuse things.
So I raced upstairs to the bookshelf,
Opened one of your little volumes and found
That I was right—
The paper was in error.
For there you were,
Just as you always had been.—
The rockets and the pinwheels and the cold.
And best of all—
There were the soft words
That look so pretty running on the page—
Little letters on the white paper you talk so much about.
It was as if a fresh breeze,
Blowing across the hot room,
Had cooled my cheek.
I felt as tho I had dipped my hand
Into a garden-pool at night
Where were reflected heaven and the stars,
And while the cold water swam about my wrist,
I held the stars
And let them run
Between my fingers!

WINFIELD T. SCOTT*
High School, Haverhill, Mass.

Historical subjects appeal to some young writers. The author of the following dramatic lyric lived through the Russian Revolution. The poem expresses all revolutions—"better flames of hell than darkness."

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

"Brother, brother, I am weary
Of the suffocating night,
Is the gloomy forest endless?
Do you see no gleam of light?"

**Saplings,* 1926.

"None! Have courage, friend." And onward
Still they go, though hope is dead.
Then a sob bursts through the thicket,
"Light! I see a light ahead!"

As they near it, in their faces
Breathes the heat of boughs that crack,
Leap the flames of forest-fire,
And the first cries, "Let us back!"

But the other laughs in answer,
"Conquered lies the stronger foe!
Better flames of hell than darkness.
Light shall lead us. On we go!"

VALENTINE SNOW *
Evander Childs High School, New York City

Poets are philosophers too, as is suggested by many of the preceding poems and by this varied group:

EXPERIENCE

Some people say experience is travel,
Seeing
Strange, bizarre, exotic places:
Yellow, oblique-eyed men of the Orient;
The ruins of an ancient Buddha rising from the ruins
Of an equally ancient temple;
Deep-sea divers—diving into blue, fathomless depths;
A slave mart—
And yet I say experience
Is merely our ability to endow ordinary people and ordinary places
With unordinary
Meanings.

ROSE CHRISTOPHER †
High School, La Salle, Ill.

* *The Evander Childs Anthology*, 1926.
† *The Gleam*, January, 1928.

My Philosophy

A sun-kissed river going by;
A streak of gold across the sky;
Fluttering wings in near-by trees
Sweet, sad whisper of the breeze.

Oh, I pray you, look and see
All the beauty shown to me.

Ruby Eggleston *
South High School, Minneapolis, Minn.

Trivialities

Such trivial things make my heart ache:
A lost dog wagging his tail at strangers;
A canary listening to the songs of other birds,
And the eyes of a child
Who has just discovered that Peter Pan
Was only a myth.

Marjorie Taylor †
High School, Decatur, Ill.

Songs

of a bud

I want to grow, grow, grow.
Help me, Fertile Soil;
Weep with me, Water;
Play with me, Sunshine.

I want to grow, grow, grow.
Give me exercises;
Keep away, Weeds;
Love me, You.

* *Glints in the Sand.*
† *Fragments,* 1928.

OF A CHILD

I want to grow, grow, grow.
Help me, Brain;
Weep with me, Mercy;
Play with me, Sunshine.
I want to grow, grow, grow.
Give me exercises, Energy;
Keep away, Unkindness,
Love me, You.

HARUKO TOKI YOSHII*
Polytechnic High School, Long Beach, Cal.

SWAN SONG ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The dying of the afternoon
is pale . . . and holy . . .

Set out silver sconces
for the dying of the afternoon,
and sing her out
in stained-glass peace and candlelight
with solemn chanting—
sing her out
in surplices of white—
sing, and blow the candles out.

The dying of the afternoon
is pale . . . and holy . . .

WALTER MORGAN MCELROY†
Polytechnic High School, Long Beach, Cal.

Free verse is often very effective, especially for such an ironical utterance as this:

CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas Eve
The church was dark,
And lighted

**High School Verse,* 1926.
†*High School Verse,* 1928.

Only by candles,
But nobody enjoyed the effect.
They thought
The power-house had broken down.

HENRY VON STADEN *
Alexander Hamilton High School, New York City

And these charming bits, the last one by a Japanese girl:

INSCRIPTION FOR A CLOCK

The clock,
An able secretary,
Writes in shorthand
What time dictates.

FRANK BERCHENKO †
Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

QUERY

Wee Free Verse,
Are you a
Delicate sentence
Broken into
Fragments, like
A bit of cloud
That wafts down
From a winter
Sky?

HARUKO TOKI YOSHII ‡
Polytechnic High School, Long Beach, Cal.

A high degree of artistry may be developed by young poets. The effect of alliteration and onomatopoeia and the ludicrous effect of over-done alliteration are easy enough to understand. The subtler values of tone color may be studied in lines from Tennyson—or in this gem by a third-term pupil. Notice the repetition of *r* throughout the little poem,

* *Anthology of Verse*, 1927.
† *Selected Poetry.*
‡ *High School Verse*, 1926.

the *m's, n's* and *o's,* in the fourth lines; and the carrying on of *c* and *g* from one line to another.

To a Rose

Warm, red rose,
Why turn away your head?
Is it a gallant's careless gaze
Or your own consuming charm
That gives your cheek its pomegranate tinge?

Edwin Crimmins
Evander Childs High School, New York City

In this one he plays up the sibilants, but not enough to give the hissing effect that made Tennyson exclaim, "Kick the geese out of that line!"

Lilacs

Then May, with lilacs
Smiled on the soft ground;
Smiled with her blossoms
On the young grass;
With lilac light through a fairy glass,
Where lovers and lovers
Pass and pass.

Edwin Crimmins
Evander Childs High School, New York City

This lovely bit of music has liquids in almost every word:

Lilia lingered, like a silver petal, falling in the moon light
The stars were but reflections of the glow in Lilia's eyes;
Lilia's hair was long and dark, a light slept in each wave of it;
The night was fair and beautiful but—not lovelier than Lilia.

Fragment of a poem by Dorothy Kurzmack
Wadleigh High School, New York City

Rather rarely we find the difficult French forms attempted. Sometimes these attempts are very successful indeed. I have

some excellent examples of the villanelle, the rondel, and the rondeau, but the exigencies of space will permit only a triolet:

NOCTURNE

Moonlight on your hair,
Star-dust in your eyes.
Still I see you there,
Moonlight on your hair—
Moonbeams made you fair,
Star-dreams made you wise.
Moonlight on your hair,
Star-dust in your eyes.

HELEN WALL *
Evander Childs High School, New York City

Recently the Japanese hokku has become almost popular in New York City schools. This ancient Japanese form is made up of three lines, of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. The subject is an abstract one, usually a season of the year, and this is brought out by the mention of some very suggestive detail, as in this classic example:

SPRING

The old pond, aye, and
The sound of a frog jumping
Into the water.

"The poem starts; the thought goes on," says a Japanese proverb.

These are New York City hokku poems:

CONTENTMENT

A dim lit room with
The crackle of a pine knot
Cutting the dry air.

ROBERT GOLDFARB †
George Washington High School, New York City

* *The Evander Childs Anthology of Student Verse,* 1928.
† *The Fort George Lantern,* March, 1927.

Winter

Out of the north wind
One flake steps daintily on
A gray cobblestone.

William Pearlman *
George Washington High School, New York City

Spring

Peach blooms are awake,
The sun warming each soft bud
To pink, with kisses.

Marie East
Girls' High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Of all the poems that I have read in making this survey, these two following seem to me to be the finest, in mastery of technique and in depth and maturity of feeling:

Unnamed Sonnet

I have been fed on honeyed dreams so long
That I have grown to lose the taste for bread,
And though I parch for truth, I drink instead
The beaded wine of hope that cools my tongue,
But does not quench my thirst. If I were strong,
I would have done with you, nor bow my head
Beside the grave where part of me lies dead,
Nor would I seek an anodyne in song.
And yet—and yet—a dream is god-like fare,
While love is fragile fruit, wind-born of June.
Whose sharp delight is withered in July.
Because I love you more than I can bear,
I weave, all out of petals of the moon,
A love that never lived, that shall not die!

Muriel Hochdorf †
George Washington High School, New York City

* *The Fort George Lantern*, March, 1927.
† *The Cherry Tree.*

Spartan Parents

Softly, My Lord, he's sleeping. Do not wake him.
What care I if his baby grasp be tight!
Let him stay thus. To-morrow, they will take him.
He will be Sparta's. He is mine to-night.

I held him close and sang him into slumber.
Laugh if you like. 'Twas womanish, I know;
But empty nights will follow without number,
In which I shall be glad that it was so.

His toys are at your feet, My Lord, tread lightly.
The chamber is in shocking disarray.
I let him drop them there. 'Tis most unsightly.
To-morrow I will put them all away.

He will be gone to-morrow. I shall miss him
A little; but a Spartan does not weep.
Think you 'twill harm him greatly if I kiss him?
He will not know it, for he is asleep.

I gave him cake to-night. It was his last.
Nay, be not angry. 'Twas a little slice.
Their diet is a rigid one. He'll fast,
And so—I helped him to the honey twice.

To-morrow he'll be seven. Sparta claims him
To train him up—and gladly will I yield him;
But, oh, to-night, mine is a love that shames him.
I find it in my yearning heart to shield him.

Lift him up so, My Lord, but do not scare him.
He is a heavy burden. Do not fall.
How carefully and tenderly you bear him!
I'll hold the lamp before you down the hall.

His little bed is soft and snowy-sheeted.
He'll sleep on rushes in the bitter cold.
'Twill make him manly to be harshly treated;
But then, to-night, he's only six years old.

Oh, little son, your pets will die of grief.
My Lord and I are Spartans. We must live.
We have no tears in which to find relief.
Our duty is to raise and love and give.

And you, My Lord, no word of pain you've spoken,
Or vain regret. The feeble morning light
Shows me that your composure is unbroken—
And that your hair has whitened in the night.

MARY LINDSLEY *
Hunter College High School, New York City

That "creative" teaching is possible in high schools has been demonstrated by the poems quoted in this article. Its importance may be realized if we consider some of the results of such teaching.

The benefits seem to me to be at least three-fold. The most immediate result is joy, which, like beauty, is its own excuse for being. The happiness of these creating youngsters is wonderful to see. What had seemed to be a dull clod or an unmitigated pest is transformed into a singing, shouting, dancing creature, radiant as a young god. And for him school is changed from a prison-house to Mount Parnassus.

Another very important result is in the appreciation of poetry that has been developed through the writing of it. Some teachers think this the only way by which a real love of poetry can be engendered. The number of university graduates who have "taken courses" in poetry that have left them quite indifferent to it, would seem to justify this conclusion. These young poets in the schools to-day will make a new "public" which will be able to discriminate between the excellent and the mediocre and will applaud the excellent. I feel that this rainbow garden of anthologies which I have collected from all parts of this country is a sign and a promise for the artistic future of America.

The third result is expressed in a part of a letter by Wil-

* *Saplings*, 1926.

liam Stanley Braithwaite quoted by Mr. Mearns in *Creative Youth*. He is referring to the Lincoln School poets:

> Even if they do not become expressed poets later on, they will become possessed of that culture whose spirit is poetry. It will be wonderful later to look back and see what perfection has been created either in manifest art or manifest personality.

We may indeed have "manifest art." It is highly probable that we have some of the great poets of the future in this article. But more important than that and certain of fulfillment is "manifest personality."

Professor Erskine once closed a lecture to English teachers with these sentences, which I copy from an old notebook: "The art of poetry is a way of life. If you are interested in art you will live intensively, not too extensively." . . . "Fine minds kindle in the presence of things that are great." . . . "Choose the best that you know and teach your pupils to love that." . . . "People who live habitually in a world of beauty will produce only the best." . . . "We become spiritual by long experience of loving beautiful things."

THE NATURE BORE*

By WORTH TUTTLE

I AM sick of Nature Lovers. There is no peace in the forest with them. You may as well go to Newport for the summer as to the North Woods with a Nature Lover. For what, I ask you, is the more tiring: meeting pretty women who give a charming response to your greeting, or being introduced to all the trees, wild flowers, birds, and beetles in your vicinity which remain perpetually dumb? I prefer the pretty women.

At least you are not led up to one of them and have to stand by, looking interested while your companion runs his or her hand over a smoothly shingled head, touches a cheek with a finger tip, and mutters, "Ash blonde, fine texture. Slight rouge. May be Mrs. David Morton Smith. No; eyebrows are arched, not straight. Would seem to belong to the Davenport family. One of the younger members. But look at the ankles! Trim, shapely. Now a predominant characteristic of the Davenports is a heavy ankle, unfortunately. Now, who—? Oh, here! I have the Social Register right in my pocket. Never go to a party without it. Just . . . a . . . minute. Oh-ho, how stupid of me! It is one of the Robertson girls, of course. See the small, well-shaped ears. Yes, indeed, one of the Robertsons—Joyce Carmel Robertson to be exact. I can tell by that little brown mole in the corner of her right eye. I identified a number of that family right in this spot last season."

Now that, I maintain, is the way of a Nature Lover in the forest with one of those little oblong, brightly illustrated

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booklets, *How to Know the Wild Flowers, Birds, Beasts, Butterflies, Weeds and Trees,* and a polite follower. But would your enjoyment of Miss Robertson's smile be heightened by observing its crinkles under a microscope? When you sit by a stream in a sunflecked wood is your pleasure increased by knowing the generic name, age, and habits of the tree that bends above you? No. The way to enjoy the woods, like people, is not to know too much about them. If you are really happy with nature, you know about as much about it as I do: trees are oak, ash, maple, birch, or greenwood; birds, black, blue, red, canary, or parrot; rocks are granite or just plain rock; and a mosquito is a pest. That may not be enough for misplaced Scout-masters, camp councilors, and other congenital contributors to the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* but it is quite enough for me and for all my friends, and must be for the woman I marry.

Only last week-end, hoping to meet that elusive lady, I accepted an invitation to a house-party in the uplands, and after breakfast left most of the company on the porch misnaming all the visible mountains, and wandered down to the brook for peace. There, sitting pensively, her legs a-dangle over the bridge, was a creature who from across the hearth the evening before had intrigued me. With an apology for intruding on what I took to be her thoughts, I dropped down beside her. Surely here I had found a companion who would sit as silent as I and let the brook babble. The smile which greeted me promised that. Ah, perhaps I *had* intrigued her. . . . I glanced up, meditatively, at the branch above us, seeking the lyric phrase which would cap our perfect communion.

"What *is* that tree?" she asked explosively. "I've been sitting here ten minutes trying to identify it."

"Silver maple," I replied blandly, not a tremor in my voice betraying my emotion.

She laughed scornfully. "What on earth made you think that? I'm almost certain it's a shagbark. See how its leaves are shaped, and look at—"

With a murmured apology I strode into the refreshing depths of the forest—and withdrew my foot, before my

weight had followed it, from the back of another one of them. She was flat on her tummy in a bed of ferns, a microscope held professionally above a shivering specimen. "Sh-sh, I *think* I've found a Sensitive Fern! Don't come a step nearer, or it'll close up before I've got it!"

I did not come a step nearer. On the contrary. . . .

If you have suffered as I have, you will learn that your only protection lies in recognizing these Nature Bores at home, before you accept invitations to their hunting grounds. Let me give you a hint or two. They are the people who call a spade a spade and a few people a "group." They order French pastries by name, they know the alphabet of the vitamines and the flags of all nations. They never call anything a thingamajig or anybody a whatchoumaycallum. They, in short, speak accurately, not descriptively, and grow fat on factograms and properly chosen calories. But, I warn you, if you do find yourself inescapably in their company, don't, *don't* pretend, or even be offhand, about knowing one of God's creatures by name unless you are sure you'll not meet it face to face. It is infinitely worse than claiming friendship with the Prince of Wales or Beatrice Lillie. They, I understand, would use a bit of their boundless tact in relieving you of embarrassment. But not so the birds, flowers, trees, and grasshoppers. They do everything to confuse. *Your* buttercup is as likely to be a peony, and *your* mushroom a rose.

TO A MAN OF ACTION*

By MARY FINETTE BARBER

YOU startle, like a scarlet tanager,
Slashing the world with youth. You are as right
As the sun, but there are shadowed ways to choose.
Between the sunlight here and sunlight there
I like to come upon the evening, cool
In sleep, within the northward lee of streets,
In pointed shadows creviced on cathedrals,
Often in old men's eyes. It is a way
Of hinting laziness, but hear me out!
Take any old man nodding in the Park,
Whose advent is as certain as the sun
Until he finds a sounder sleep, and he
And I are of an age. This is disguise,
I wear, of youth. So Buddha-still he sits
A passing squirrel considers him no more
Than any stump or stone. Whatever spirit
Drove his gnarled hands already has departed,
And earth absorbs the rest. His very coat
Grows mossy-green at shoulders, and his eyes
Are full of pigeons drifting to the ground—
Gray wings and bodies modeled by the press
Of sweet resistant air. Another wing—
And he will sleep! But, friend, I fear for you
That after the loud drama of your days
You will be mis-cast in the new masque of death,
Without a gesture suited to the strange
Hushed pantomime, while this old man and I
Will dally with it, being but a part
We played together many matinées.

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DEATH *

By GERTRUDE RYDER BENNETT

WHEN you come to visit me—
Come quietly.
Let them throw my windows wide
That I may see the country side.

Let the sun be warm the day
That you take my soul away.

Stroll along the lane and wait
Just a moment at my gate.

Give me time to smooth my hair
And pick a crimson rose to wear.

Come as years have come to me—
Come quietly.

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WHEN LOVE AND TRUTH HAVE MET*

By LOIS CANFIL

WHEN You have bent Your head quite close, as now,
There is a roughness where a thorn-point stings.
My own has nothing there. Too smooth my brow.

You fold my hands in Yours. I feel the scar
Of ragged nail-torn wounds. I fear hard things
And shrink, O shame! for hands too soft by far.

Our garden walk has stains I dread to see,
Because I fleetly run green-swarded years
Without a thrust of flint-shard wounding me.

You ask me, whispering, "How much of love is there?"
I turn my head unanswering, lest You see tears:
How can I say, "I love"? I do not dare.

*Reprinted from *The Commonweal* by special permission of the author and the publisher.

RETREAT*

By DOROTHY BELLE FLANAGAN

HIS voice is the soft monotony of falling water;
There is a fringe of white above his ears; he fiddles
With the cross hung on his girth, explains the riddles
Propounded by God. The chapel is a quiet place;
Thin pale candles burn in silence on the altar.
The chapel is a hush; one gnarled old nun sleeps
With folded hands; one whose mouth is young weeps
Behind her beads. The valiant world is locked outside;
The singing world where one may love and bear a daughter
Or a blue-eyed son, where one may seek the key
That fits the door of Life's inscrutability.
Here is refuge from the deadly sins, from pride—
But pride is a white and shining thing! . . . Here is grace
Against the seven sins, pride, covetousness, lust—
Why should white bodies go unburnt into the dust
Of eternity? How can white breasts accept a vow
Of Chasteness? . . . "Deliver us from temptation, Lord, deliver" . . .
Here is holy refuge. Slim white candles flame—
White? . . . *Flame?* . . . The old priest's voice does not falter;
He is a saintly man. Why does God allow
Some to be good, and some to try and pray and try
And weep through night and still be sinful till they die
And after that, who knows? The priest kneels slowly there
To chant the litany made of the Virgin's name,
"Queen of Purity, pray for us!" The peace of prayer
Is on the old; only scarlet young mouths quiver.

* Reprinted from *The New Yorker* by special permission of the author and the publisher.

BIRDS *

By FLORIDA WATTS SMYTH

I

WINTER is a black and white woodpecker
Climbing a crystal tree;
Spring is a green parrot
With a golden beak,
But summer trails its colors across the earth
Like a bird of paradise.

II

When I said that nothing was so bright
As a cardinal on a bank of snow,
I had forgotten
The first bluebird of spring.

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NEAR DAWN *

By FLORIDA WATTS SMYTH

LIKE seaweed in a still cove,
The trees extend each branch and twig
In the still air.
That strange, bright shell
Caught in their mesh
Is called the moon.

* Reprinted by special permission of the author from *Troubadour*.

EMBROIDERY *

By FLORIDA WATTS SMYTH

AT sunset, the lawn
Is a green and gold veil
Through which runs a design
Of catbirds worked in dull silver,
And robins done in red-gold.

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THE PRODIGAL *

By ANNIE BALCOMB WHEELER

THE season's gold is spent. Hilltops that blazed
With gorse and goldenrod, and dusty roads
Are dim with dead bloom hovering like dazed
Gray ghosts who linger near their old abodes.
The lutanists are gone, save one in coat
Of weathered blue. Remember how he sang
In tulip-time? Now hear his grieving note
Through plundered fields where icy fingers twang
The wires and leafless boughs. All that remains
Of the shining hoard glints from the stricken hedge
Where old witch hazel flaunts her dull-gold chains,
The spendthrift's parting gift to her, his pledge
Of blithe return with greater store to keep
His age-old tryst—after the long white sleep.

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WILDERNESS ROAD*

A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts

By ALICE TIMONEY *and* ANNE COLLINS

First produced by The Morningside Players of Columbia University on February 8 and 9, 1929, under the direction of Milton Smith.

CHARACTERS

John Kennedy, a jailer.....*Harold Book*
Geoffrey Kennedy, his son.....*James MacDonald*
Janet Kennedy, his daughter.....*Elizabeth Ann Moses*
Clarice Pottle, their aunt.....*Olivia Hobgood*
Jerry, a jail attendant.....*S. Kennard Brookmire*
Philip Lake, a northerner.....*Sidney Van Horne Upjohn*
Laurel Whittaker, a mountain woman
Elizabeth Von Nardroff
Stevie, her son.....*Turner Bullock*
Doak Ammon, a mountaineer.....*James MacDonald*
Cutshall Davis, a mountaineer.....*William Ludwig*
Pliny Parr, a mountain preacher...*S. Kennard Brookmire*
A Mountain Sheriff.....*Milton Smith*

SCENES

Act I. The jailer's quarters in a Kentucky jail. A morning in November.

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Act II. The Whittaker cabin in the mountains. A week later.
Act III. The same. The next morning.

Act I

Time: *Morning in Harrodstown, Sweet Grass County, Kentucky.*

Scene: *The jailer's quarters. A big living room with a high ceiling. Two long windows on right in front of which are potted ferns. On the left is a fireplace; also a door. In the back, big double doors, thrown open, lead to the hall. One end of this hall leads to the front door and street. The other end to the jail proper. The living room and office combined contain a great disorderly desk, a library table, lounge, easy chairs. Some fairly good pictures. A thumbed calendar, with startling figures, hangs crookedly over the desk. An old bookcase. A telephone on the desk. A swivel chair. A revolver lying carelessly on the table. A shotgun upright in one corner. Throughout the first act jail noises are constantly heard. Sometimes singing, sometimes humming, now and then cursing, once weeping; laughter often; the grinding of the jail lock, the clanging of the jail door. When the door is opened to admit any one or release him, these noises are quite distinct, at other times you are aware of them, without their disturbing you.*
Prior to the rise of the curtain the prisoners in the jail are singing the last of the chorus of "My Old Kentucky Home." Ribald laughter. A negro voice derisively, "Who gonna go yo' bail?" *As the curtain rises a whistle is heard, as though one of the prisoners were trying, good naturedly, to catch the attention of a passer-by. The telephone in the jailer's quarters is ringing shrilly.*
Enter Jerry *dropping broom to answer telephone.*

Jerry (*straining to hear*)
Hello. Hel-LO! Yes. This is th' jail. Whaddy say? I

can't hear—Did they lock Collier Lardner up? (*Disgusted.*) Wait a minute—I can't hear nothin'. (*Goes to speaking tube in back wall and shouts.*) Hey there! Shorty! Shut them prisoners up! I said, cut out the damn noise! (*Returns to telephone.*) Whaddy want, now? (*Enlightened.*) Aw! Charlie the barber. Naw, he ain't locked up. If they bring him here I'll let you know. (*Helpfully.*) Didja try the 'ors-pittle?

(*Enter* GEOFFREY. *He searches for his book.*)

JERRY (*explaining the telephone call*)

Charlie the barber didn't turn up at the shop. 'At was his boss. He thought he might be here in jail.

GEOFFREY

I saw him drunk, down on the Creek. But he ought to be locked up. . . .

JERRY

Shucks, jail's full now, 'thout foolin' with drunks. . . .

GEOFFREY

Oh, I don't mean that. He ought to be run in for the hair cuts he gives.

(*The front doorbell rings,* JERRY *exits to answer it, guffawing.*)

JERRY

Ain't it the truth? Wonder who that is *now* at the door?

(*Enter* JANET *hurriedly from back door, holding a telegram.*)

JANET (*waving the wire*)

Look! She's coming. . . .

GEOFFREY

A prisoner or a guest?

JANET (*straightening up room*)

Don't kid. Aunt Clarice. . . .

GEOFFREY

Again? Oh my God!

JANET (*anxiously looking at message*)

She doesn't say what time.

GEOFFREY

Any time is too soon and too often.

JANET

This time is different. Put down that book. I want to tell you. . . .

GEOFFREY

My dear sister! *I will not* quit Keats to talk about that flighty, hysterical woman. I think she's terrible. She's a pretender, she's a climber, she's a. . . .

JANET

Well, she's our aunt.

GEOFFREY

Our aunt, God help us! I haven't been drunk since election. But now I feel the call.

(*Enter* JERRY. *He peeps into a small market basket as he walks along.*)

JERRY

This here's for that nigger that bust in the railroad car. His wife done brung it.

GEOFFREY (*indifferently*)

Better search it, before you take it in jail.

JANET (*goes to desk, picks up a slip of paper*)

Here Jerry. When you go in give this to Jim Lee. He wanted to know how many more days he had in jail.

JERRY (*searching*)

Yessum.

(*He displays a pie, looks hard at it, then draws a clean shirt out of the basket, shakes it, then runs his hand around bottom of basket.*)

GEOFFREY (*resignedly*)

How long is Aunt Clarice going to stay?

JANET

Who knows?

JERRY

Ain't no saw in this. I bet Kittie Bell stole this pie. She's cookin' fer Mrs. Baughman.

GEOFFREY (*to* JERRY)

Leave it in the hall. I'll give it to him directly.

JANET

And sweep off the front pavement too, Jerry. And that

basket of leaves in the front yard. Take it away. You know how particular Aunt Clarice is. She's coming today.

JERRY

Sho' nuff? I better fix that fa'cet in th' bathroom. Water a-drippin' gits her mad. . . . (*Exits.*)

GEOFFREY (*seriously*)

Honestly, Jan, I loathe the woman. I don't see how you can endure her.

JANET (*defensively*)

She's not so bad underneath. The only good times I've ever had have been through her.

GEOFFREY

She has been pretty decent to you. But the price you've paid. Traveling around with that silly old sham. Rollin' in money and a lot o' Goddamn flapdoodle.

JANET

She's the only person who sees the plight I'm in. If she didn't take me away from here now and then, what good times would I have? Nobody in this town asks us to anything.

GEOFFREY

There you go again. Grievin' because you're not in the social swim. That's what Aunt Clarice has done to you. Filled you up with a lot o' hokum. Who wants to go to their dull old parties? Well, thank God they don't ask me.

JANET

Just because you don't want to go is no reason I don't. I like parties. I *love* to dance! I'm sick of being out of things. Because we're poor and Daddy keeps the jail they think we're on the level with the prisoners.

GEOFFREY (*more seriously*)

Now, Jan, don't be an idiot. Stewing about imaginary slights and snubs. And they *are* imaginary.

JANET (*incredulously*)

Imaginary! Do the Craigs ever invite us to their parties? Do the Huddlesons ever call on us? Do any of them

really mix with us? It's a snobbish little old town and I loathe it.

GEOFFREY (*half angrily*)

What do you *care?* After all, you're twenty-two and pretty.

(*At this point the negroes in jail sing a few lines of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot." It fades as* JANET *speaks.*)

JANET (*passionately*)

You ask me how I can endure Aunt Clarice? Because she takes me away from this. When I'm away I'm like other girls. Happy and carefree. I'm tired of running this house and helping Daddy keep this old jail. I wish I could go down to Louisville and get a job.

GEOFFREY

What do you want with a job? Suppose you had old man Tucker yapping at your heels all the time, the way he does me. If you want a hard job, just try to sell real estate in this town. Jeez! There hasn't been a sale since the war.

JANET

I suppose if I were really hell bent on a job I could get one. But there it is again—Daddy can't spare me. I've got to stay here. The trouble is—I want to be happy, yet I want other people to be happy too.

GEOFFREY

Well, if you married, you'd leave home—

JANET (*derisively*)

You are funny! Who'll I marry? The nice men of this town don't even know me.

GEOFFREY (*teasing*)

Then why not coöperate with Aunt Clarice? She's always telling about the wonderful men she introduces you to, when you all go away.

JANET (*despondently*)

Oh, I'm sick of meeting men under false pretenses. Her technique is simple. I'm introduced to an eligible. Give the impression that I'm the protégé of a wealthy aunt. That I've money. Position. Background. But I'm

through with all that sort of thing. I'm not going on with it any longer. (*Half comically.*) I reckon I'll be an old maid for my honesty.

GEOFFREY (*with discernment*)

Who is he?

JANET

What do you mean?

GEOFFREY

You've met some one. That's why you can't go on with it.

JANET

You're right, Geoff. You've guessed it. There is some one. I did meet a man at White Sulphur. (*Eagerly.*) Oh, Geoff, he's wonderful. Not what you'd call good looking, but he's just everything I ever wanted in a man.

GEOFFREY (*laconically*)

Money?

JANET

I don't know. And it's a funny thing, Geoff, I don't care! But I think he must have. He bought me orchids and he has a car. (*Comically despondent.*) But he belongs to an old family. One of the Back Bays of Boston. (*The grinding of the jail lock is heard. The door is open for a moment. Then jail voices are heard distinctly.* "Boss, when's my trial comin' up?" "Ary letter fo' me?")

KENNEDY (*offstage*)

One at a time, boys. I'll be back directly.

(*The door is heard to slam.*)

JANET (*putting her fingers to her lips*)

Sh! Here comes Dad! (*Going to meet him, linking her arm through his.*) I wouldn't take fifty million dollars for my Dad!

KENNEDY (*patting her shoulder*)

My pretty Red Bird! Her Dad couldn't get along without her! Here Geoffrey, what does this say? (*Proffering a note to* GEOFFREY.) A fellow in jail just handed it to me.

GEOFFREY (*unfolding the sheet of soiled paper*)

Somebody giving you inside stuff?

KENNEDY

See for yourself. I don't know.

GEOFFREY (*deciphering the scrawl*)

"Dear Boss." (*In an undertone.*) I'm sure of that much. I can't make this out.

JANET

Let me see. (*They both look at the note.*)

GEOFFREY (*reads haltingly*)

"Dear Boss, you shore is good man to send sack of flour and piece of meat to my children while I am lock up. Boss, I am innocent man. Please tell Jedge Cotten. Three good men in this world—Mr. Abe Linckern, Booker Washington and Jailer John Ken'dy. Truly yours, Aaron Rhodes."

(JANET *and* GEOFFREY *laugh.*)

KENNEDY (*embarrassed and fussing around desk to pass it off*)

God help that poor simple nigger. Innocent! Upon my word he's a trifling, no-count nigger who'll be lucky to get off with two years.

JANET (*tenderly*)

He's right. (*Half scolding.*) But Daddy, you're too good. You'll die in the poor house. Where's your blue coat? Did you give it away?

KENNEDY (*earnestly and apologetically*)

Poor old Charley Dunn was half naked and I—well, never mind that—

(GEOFFREY *and* JANET *laugh.*)

GEOFFREY (*kidding his father*)

And Janet, he gave Stevie my brown sweater—

KENNEDY (*suddenly, peering at a long sheet of legal paper*)

Geoffrey, did you write the head for that petition?

GEOFFREY (*amiably*)

Not yet. I'm going to.

KENNEDY (*Storms gustily for a moment. Good-naturedly*)

You're going to! You're going to make out that account against the County! Janet is going to write that letter to the insurance people for me! Undoubtedly, I have the

most careless, heedless children a man ever had. If *I* had only had you children's chance! You know it comes hard with me to handle a pen—

JANET (*runs impulsively to her father and thrusts her arm in his*)

Ah, Daddy, hush! You're the wisest, kindest man in the world. Anybody can learn books, but *you,* why *you're* the—

KENNEDY (*is never heavy. Mollified*)

Well, well. It's all right. But Geoffrey, you are the *toughest* boy to get started at anything! Here I have been begging you to fix up a petition to the Governor asking him to commute Stevie's death sentence. And you haven't done it yet. Now, Geoffrey, that boy is facing death. He's got no friends. I've promised to help him. Now that Green is elected Governor, I must get up a petition to him. (*He waves a long sheet of blank paper.*) I'm going to circulate around the county and get every man, woman and child to sign it. I'm going to put it up so strong to the Governor that he'll be bound to act on it. (*Thoughtfully.*) It seems to me, my children have grown mighty cold to other people's misfortunes.

GEOFFREY (*contritely*)

All right, Dad, we'll start the thing right now.

(KENNEDY *rises from the desk chair and* GEOFFREY *takes his place. He continues.*)

GEOFFREY

You know Dad, that Janet and I don't mean to be heartless, but it's like—well, it's like being a surgeon in a hospital. We get so used to sob-stuff that nothing makes an impression.

KENNEDY

Just because you and Janet have got a good home and an education you musn't stop thinking about the other fellow.

GEOFFREY (*with paper ready*)

I'll write anything you say, Dad, but isn't this petition premature? I thought Stevie's case was before the Court of Appeals?

KENNEDY (*holding up his hand with a "sh-sh" motion and lowering his voice*)

The news came this morning. The decision was affirmed. That means that only the Governor can help him now. We must hurry—

JANET (*sympathetically*)

Poor Stevie. It seems inhuman to send him to the chair. He's only nineteen.

GEOFFREY (*writes, then reads*)

How's this? "To His Excellency, the Governor of Kentucky. We, the undersigned citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, ask executive clemency on behalf of one Stevie Whittaker, of Bell County, Kentucky. (*Pause.*) Said Whittaker was convicted of murder and was sentenced to die in the electric chair."

KENNEDY (*interrupts and dictates, ardently adopting a personal tone*)

Add this. "Now, Governor, said prisoner is only a boy." (KENNEDY *dictates majestically as he paces up and down the room, hands behind him.*)

"He is the youngest person ever to receive the death penalty in this State. The boy has been a model prisoner, and we the citizens of Sweet Grass County recommend this prisoner as being worthy of a pardon—or at least you should commute his sentence." (*After a thought.*) Postscript. "Governor, this boy is the only son of a widow woman. He's all she's got."

GEOFFREY (*laughs*)

I rebel at the postscript.

KENNEDY (*authoritatively*)

Put it down. Just as I say. Eh, Red Bird?

JANET (*laughs and runs to him and hugs him*)

Yes, put it in. I think you would make a good Senator. (KENNEDY *picks up the embryo petition and looks at it with satisfaction.*)

KENNEDY

Now for the signatures.

GEOFFREY (*handing him a pen*)

Suppose you start it off. Put your John Hancock there. (KENNEDY *sits down and a trifle clumsily, signs.* JANET *looks over his shoulder, her arm about him. The phone rings,* GEOFFREY *goes to answer it.*)

KENNEDY (*as he signs*)

I'll take this up on Main Street and before noon I'll have one hundred names.

GEOFFREY

Yes. Yeah. Right here. (*Turns hurriedly.*) Dad, Chief of Police on the wire. Wants you right away.

KENNEDY (*stuffing petition in his pocket as he goes. Taking phone.*)

What is it, Logue? Fight? Out at the railroad? Yes, I know where you mean. I'll jump in the Ford and be right out. (*Hangs up. To* GEOFFREY) Another mess. Jess Clark's boy is drunk and shot Tom Devine. (*Rushing about.*) Geoff, where are the new handcuffs? (*Puts a pistol in his pocket.*)

JANET (*excited*)

Here's your billy. . . . Is Devine dead?

GEOFFREY

I've been looking for those two to have trouble. I'm going, too.

KENNEDY (*pitches* GEOFFREY *the jail keys*)

No. You stay around here. The grand jury might come to-day to inspect the jail.

(KENNEDY *exits in a trot.*)

JANET (*calling after him*)

Be careful. Don't get hurt. (*A pause, then says to* GEOFFREY.) Why does Logue Goode always call Daddy every time there's a shooting scrape? That's his job. Daddy has enough to do right here without being called out every day like this.

GEOFFREY

He get's a kick out of it. He hasn't missed a fight or a fire since he's been in office. Besides, he knows how to handle a drunk.

JANET

He's the best thing that ever lived.

GEOFFREY

It's a mystery to me what he sees in it—this Samaritan business, I mean. Sits up all night to catch a horse-thief. Next day plants himself at the telephone trying to get some one to bail him out.

JANET

Bless his heart. But Geoffrey, father doesn't know me. He never dreams that I have wild thoughts. That I'd like to unlock the jail doors and let all the prisoners out and then run away myself. I feel so caged up that I know how it feels to be a prisoner. (*With a change of tone, dreamily.*) You know, Geoff, if I were Stevie, I'd run away. He didn't commit such an awful crime. Not as things go in the mountains.

GEOFFREY

What would the old man say if he heard you?

JANET

Oh I know how he'd feel if a prisoner got away. As if he had failed to do his duty.

GEOFFREY

It's a point of honor with him.

(*A negro voice shouts jubilantly,* "Big Casino. I done made a sweep, too!")

JANET

I wouldn't change one single thing about father for anything in the world. (*Thoughtfully.*) I wish Phil Lake knew him.

GEOFFREY

Phil Lake. So that's his name. Did he—er—propose?

JANET

I didn't give him a chance. I—well, I liked him so, I didn't want to tell him the truth about myself, so I left White Sulphur. I didn't even tell Aunt Clarice I was leaving. I know she's going to be angry.

GEOFFREY

"The truth about yourself." As if you had a lurid past!

Janet, if he's the right sort and if he really likes you—the things that you're worrying about won't matter.

JANET

I don't know if I did a foolish thing or an honorable one. I never met a man I liked so well.

JERRY (*bursting in*)

'Scuse me, Miss Janet, but Miss Claridge is done come. She's out here in front of the house in a automobeel.

JANET (*looking out of the window*)

Yes. There she is.

JERRY

Old Dan Jones fetched her in from the deppo an' she's givin' him a argyment 'bout the fare—

GEOFFREY (*plaintively*)

Good Lord.

JANET

Jerry, you'd better help Aunt Clarice with her bags. (*Looking out of the window.*) I can tell by the very toss of her head that she is boiling over.

GEOFFREY (*comically dismayed*)

I'm going to beat it.

JANET (*quickly*)

No! Stick around.

GEOFFREY

I'll be back when she's cooled down.

(*Exits.*)

(*Enter* CLARICE. *While* JANET *greets her,* CLARICE *angrily flings off her coat, jerks off her gloves, tosses her purse on the table with a bang; her eyes snap, her lips twitch.*)

JANET

This is a surprise! Come in. (*Attempts to kiss her; is repulsed.*)

(CLARICE *throws her hat on the divan and glares without speaking. There is a vibrant pause.*)

JANET

How are you?—Er—What's the matter?

CLARICE

How am I indeed! A lot you care! The matter! There's plenty the matter.

JANET (*agitated*)

Don't be angry—I know I should have explained why I was leaving White Sulphur—but—sit over here, Aunt Clarice. Let me explain.

CLARICE

That's just what I've come for. An explanation. Of all the shabby tricks—I'd think you'd have more common courtesy—you, to run home without a word. Leaving me high and dry with the bag to hold.

JANET (*feebly*)

I did leave a note.

CLARICE

Don't talk to me about that scrawl. It didn't amount to that—(*She snaps her fingers.*)

JANET

It was like this—

CLARICE

I don't know what got into you. You were having one grand time. At *my* expense. You had Phil Lake eating out of your hand—

JANET (*brightening*)

Was he there when you left?

CLARICE

You'd like to know, wouldn't you? I can tell you, that you made a great zany out of him as well as me. I was wild answering his questions. I was ashamed to let him know I had a niece who would treat me so rudely. I was embarrassed. He standing on one leg looking up in my face asking a million questions, and me, not able to answer a one of them. It was hateful of you, Janet. It seemed to me he was just a little too anxious. Did you two quarrel?

JANET

No.

CLARICE
Did you leave a note for him?
JANET
No.
CLARICE
Well, in the name of common sense, *why* did you leave?
JANET (*fumbling*)
It was so difficult to make you understand. To make any one understand—
CLARICE
There is only one construction made. At the hotel the old tabbies were buzzing, I can tell you.
JANET
What do you mean?
CLARICE (*in an offhand manner*)
They think something questionable happened between you and Phil Lake.
JANET (*earnestly*)
Nothing happened.
CLARICE
So *you* say!
JANET (*shocked*)
You don't think that?
CLARICE
I'm sure you never confide in me. What am I to think?
JANET (*beginning to weep*)
You've no right to say such a thing to me.
CLARICE
Why can't you be open and aboveboard? If he didn't go too far—what did he do?
JANET
You are only saying that to hurt me. You know you don't believe it. You don't seem to understand that there are decent men. Phil Lake is one of them. I'll tell you why I left. Because I was seeing too much of him. I was getting too interested in him. I—I—was afraid he was falling in love with me—I couldn't tell him the truth—about all this—so I left.

CLARICE (*genuinely surprised*)

Upon my word! Of all the crack pate reasoning. Why do you think I took you there? So some nice man *would* fall in love with you. And you threw away your chances. I could box your ears. (*Pause.*) God knows you'd be here a long day before you'd get any one worth while.

JANET

Oh, marry—marry! That's all you think of!

CLARICE (*seriously*)

Certainly I think of your marriage. Since you were a little girl there hasn't been a night that I haven't lain awake planning a successful marriage for you. Do stop crying. I shouldn't have said what I did. But you made me so angry. (*Grudgingly.*) If I love any one in the world, I love you. You know that.

JANET (*sadly*)

I know, Aunt Clarice. I see your point of view. There was a time when I wanted to do it too. You think I lost my nerve. Well, I did. So—I just thought I'd leave and that would end it.

CLARICE

Well, you haven't ended it. The first thing he wanted to know was your address.

JANET (*alarmed*)

You didn't tell him where I lived?

CLARICE (*pettishly*)

No, of course not. I told him the Puritan, Louisville. He's sure to write, so when I was in Louisville, I told the Puritan to forward your mail here.

(JERRY *ambles in.*)

JERRY

Miss Claridge, I done put all your things away—

CLARICE (*crossly*)

There you go again with your Claridging. My name is Clarice—CLARICE—understand? (*To* JANET.) Get my purse. (JERRY *looks beatific.*) There's something in it for *you,* Janet, wrapped in tissue paper.

JANET

Oh, thank you. (*Opens purse, then package.*)

JERRY

I never can 'member your fancy name. Used to call you Clara when me an' you went to school together. 'Member that time I turnt you down in spellin'?

CLARICE (*snappishly*)

Your memory is as long as your tongue. I don't want any of either.

(JANET *has opened small box and displays a string of beads.*)

JANET (*enthusiastically*)

Oh, Aunt Clarice! They're lovely!

CLARICE

They're well cut. They'll go with your green evening dress.

(JANET *examines beads on her neck in the mirror.* JERRY *seats himself and begins to squint at his knee.*)

CLARICE (*exasperated*)

What are you doing, now, for heaven's sakes?

JERRY (*sits on the end of a chair bent half double. He has a needle stuck upright in the knee of his trousers and is making an effort to thread it*)

I'm tredding a needle. Nigger in jail bust his britches.

CLARICE (*with satisfaction to* JANET)

Did I tell you what Mrs. Parker said? That you looked stunning the night you wore your green dress. She said there wasn't a girl at the Springs who could touch you.

JANET (*sighing*)

Oh, I did have a good time, Aunt Clarice.

CLARICE (*reminiscently*)

Yes. We were lucky enough to get in with the right people. You never missed a party. Janet, you really were the most popular girl there. Even that proud old dowager Throckmorton wanted to know where you learned to ride so well.

JANET (*ironically*)
I suppose you told her the truth? On Daddy's old blind horse.

JERRY (*triumphantly*)
I got it. I done tredded it. (*Goes to speaking tube and calls.*) Slim, come to the jail door. Got somethin' fer you. I'll poke it through the peephole.

SLIM (*calling from jail*)
Come a-runnin'.

JERRY (*chuckling to himself*)
Better not stick his nose too close.
(*Exits.*)

CLARICE
Janet, how can you endure this place? That Jerry. Like a cockroach. Always walking out before company. I have told John Kennedy not to let that varmint have the run of the house.
(*There is a commotion at the front door; offstage noises of several persons trampling up the steps.* KENNEDY *is heard to say,* "You search him, Logue, while I get the keys." *The arrested man is heard saying,* "I declare before God he started it.")

CLARICE (*vexed*)
What now?

JANET (*getting keys from desk mechanically*)
Locking up another prisoner.

KENNEDY (*entering hurriedly*)
Janet, get me the keys. We got our man. (*Greeting* CLARICE *hurriedly.*) Why hello, Clara. Glad to see you again.

CLARICE
Well, I'm surprised to see you alive. I never come here but what I expect to see you brought in on a stretcher. Just listen to that— (*Pointing to hall.*)
(*The arrested prisoner is seen being escorted through the hall to the jail, while the policeman searches him.*)

PRISONER (*offstage*)
Send word to my wife, please sir, chief.

OFFICER (*offstage*)
Yeah, I'll send word. I'll keep this razor.
KENNEDY (*taking keys from* JANET)
Good! (*To* CLARICE.) Don't worry about me. (*Exits hurriedly.*)
(*Noise continues in hall, door is heard to open, then slam. The moment it is opened a voice from jail is heard derisively* "'Nother Boarder!" *Then the jail hum is subdued.*)
CLARICE
My nerves can't stand this. The scum of the county.
JANET (*wearily*)
Do you want to go to your room?
(*Jail door heard to unlock, then slam.*)
CLARICE (*recollecting herself*)
No, I don't want to go to my room.
(*Enter* JERRY *bearing bundle of pamphlets.*)
JERRY
Miss Janet, that lady gimme these fer the prisoners.
JANET (*abstractedly*)
What lady?
JERRY
Miss Dove Ferris, that big lady that looks like a Injun chief. (*Looking at a pamphlet.*) She says they'll help them niggers' souls.
CLARICE (*to* JANET)
Dove Ferris and her missionary work! She better send primers so they can learn to read.
JERRY (*squinting*)
This one's 'bout the Im-im-mo-mor-al-ity o' the Soul. (*He laughs.*) 'Em niggers druther git a chaw o' terbaccy.
(*A sound of a motor brings* JERRY *to the window.*)
CLARICE (*shaking her foot*)
Dove Ferris! My word! Does she still sing in the choir and live with old Charley Coates?
JERRY (*to himself*)
That's a funny lookin' car. Looks like a torpedo boat. Hit don't belong round this town. Stranger gittin' out. (*Chuckles.*) License plate got a little fish on it—

JANET (*runs to window*)
Why, that's Phil Lake's car. He's getting out! You *did* tell him I lived here, then!

CLARICE (*excitedly*)
Of course I didn't tell him. Are you sure it is he?
(*The doorbell rings.*)

JANET
Jerry, answer the bell. Take him in the other room. Find out what he wants.

CLARICE (*in an awful voice*)
This is terrible. I didn't give him so much as a hint—

JANET
I don't understand—

CLARICE
Oh, Janet, this is *too* bad!

JANET
I simply won't see him.
(JERRY *returns bearing a card in his dirty hand. He handles it as if it were a shovel.*)

JERRY (*in a croaking whisper*)
He gimme this.

JANET
What did he say? What does he want?

JERRY
I don't know what he wants. He fetched in his pocketbook an' gimme this.
(*Hands* JANET *the card.*)

JANET (*impatiently*)
Did he ask for me?

CLARICE
Oh, dear me—I look a fright. I wish I'd gone to my room.

JERRY (*to* JANET)
No'm. He didn't want you. He wants Boss.
(JANET *crosses room toward door on left.*)

JANET (*relieved*)
Well, call Daddy. (*The jail door closes and the Chief of Police goes out front door. To* CLARICE.) Here comes

Daddy now—he's sure to bring him in here. Come on out. This way—

(*Exit* JERRY. JANET *and* CLARICE *grab* CLARICE'S *wrap, etc., and run out left.*)

JANET

I do wonder what he wants.

CLARICE (*as she exits*)

Do you think he could have traced you?

(*Exit* JANET *and* CLARICE.)

KENNEDY (*as he enters with* PHILIP)

Mighty glad to meet you, sir. Come right in and have a chair.

(*Enter* KENNEDY *and* PHILIP.)

PHILIP

Thank you. Well, I'll tell you just what I want. I'd like to see one of your prisoners, a fellow named Stevie Whittaker.

KENNEDY

I don't believe I know your—name.

PHILIP

Lake. I'm representing the Continental Utility Company. It's an eastern concern. We're interested in buying some land down in the mountains. The Whittakers own a little parcel that we'd like to buy. I'd like to talk to him about it.

KENNEDY

Yes sir-ee. You wait right here and I'll bring him out. You couldn't talk business in there. (*Indicating jail.*) The damn niggers are so noisy.

PHILIP

Thank you. This will be fine.

(*Enter* JERRY *with a paper bag. He examines contents.*)

JERRY

You waitin' fo' Boss?

PHILIP

Yes. I just saw him.

(*Jail door unlocked, then slammed.*)

JERRY

I done been to the store, crost the street. Ever' mornin'

them prisoners worry me till I go. Less see if I got ever' thing. Four packs Luckies, two sacks Bull Durham, three plugs chawin' terbaccy. Nickel's worth o' gum drops. (*Extracts one and eats it.*) Five stamps. This here see-gar cost two bits. The bootlegger buys it. Oh, shucks! I done forget Aunt Hettie Mupsey's deck o' cards. She tells them niggers their fortune ever' day. (*Laughs heartily.*) I could tell 'em what the jedge is goin' to say.

PHILIP (*smiling*)

Must keep you hustling. How many are in jail?

JERRY

Eighteen niggers an' ten white men. 'Sides Stevie.

PHILIP

Stevie's from the mountains. How does he happen to be here in jail?

JERRY

They brought him here fer safe-keeping'. He shot old man Benge deader 'n a door nail. Ever' Benge from Coon Holler to Hell was layin' fer him. They's about to mob him.

PHILIP (*interested*)

I believe I'd like to go inside the jail.

(*Jail door unlocked, locked, and slammed.*)

JERRY (*incredulously*)

You don't wanna go in there.

PHILIP

Why not?

JERRY (*confidentially*)

Smell's awful.

PHILIP (*puzzled*)

Smell?

JERRY (*hastily*)

Oh, I don't mean no stink. I jes' mean Boss is done had one of his disenfectin' spells. He shore has a tur'ble time cleanin' up 'em lousy niggers.

(*Enter* KENNEDY *and* STEVIE.)

KENNEDY

Well, here's your man. (*Jokingly.*) I won't intrude on the

conference. I'll wait here in the hall and keep an eye on Stevie. I don't want this lad to get away. Come along, Jerry.

JERRY

All right, Boss.

(*Exit* KENNEDY *and* JERRY.)

PHILIP (*as they exit*)

Thank you. (*To* STEVIE.) My name is Lake. I've come to see you about some land you own down in the mountains. Would you like to sell it?

STEVIE

I dunno. I never thought nothin' 'bout it. I reckon you better ask mammy.

PHILIP

I will. I've been down in Cumberland County for some time, interviewing people. I went out to see your mother but she was not home.

STEVIE

I 'low she wasn't fur from the cabin. (*Irrelevantly.*) Got a cigarette?

PHILIP (*hands him a pack*)

Sure, keep them.

STEVIE

Much oblige.

PHILIP

How old are you?

STEVIE

I done turnt nineteen.

PHILIP (*pausing*)

Well, I guess we can't talk business after all. You're not of age. I will have to see your mother.

STEVIE

You can ask her, all right, but she ain't goin' to sell. Mammy don't believe in mountain folks sellin' out to the furriners.

PHILIP

Where do you mountain people get that foreigner stuff? I'm not a foreigner.

STEVIE

Anybody beant the rim o' the mountains is a furriner.

PHILIP (*curiously*)

How do you happen to be in here, anyway?

STEVIE (*simply*)

Kilt a man.

PHILIP

How did it happen? Tell me about your mother and yourself. I'm your friend.

STEVIE (*passionately*)

My mammy's a good woman. The man I kilt called her a whore. I knowed it war a lie, an' I let loose on him.

PHILIP (*touched*)

Have you any brothers or sisters?

STEVIE

I had a sister but she died.

PHILIP

Your mother must have had a hard time.

STEVIE

It wasn't so bad. I holped her. When she fed the hog, I carried a year or two; when she gathered fire-logs, I fetched a stick when I warn't much biggern one. In summer we picked berries an' in winter we trapped rabbits, and treed possums. In the nighttime we set and smoked and listened to the wind.

PHILIP

And your mother read to you?

STEVIE

Ah, no. She don't know no book larnin'. But she knows a sight o' things about the mountains and the birds and yarbs an' the like.

PHILIP

It must have been very lonely.

STEVIE

No. It wasn't lonesome. This yere (*indicating the jail*) is lots lonesomer than the mountains.

PHILIP (*rising*)

I hope you get out of here. Do you have a good lawyer?

STEVIE

Mr. Bagsley. He's all right. He took my case down to Frankfort.

PHILIP

Well, when I go back to the mountains, I'm going to see your mother and make her a good offer for your land. If she sells, you'll have some money to fight your case.

STEVIE (*with feeling*)

You're goin' back to the mountains. Them's my mountains. Sometimes when I get to studyin' about the wind a-whippin' the trees, and the birds a-flyin' ever which a-ways, an' me peepin' out like a rat in a cage, I 'low I nachelly can't stand it. I feel like I want to bust them bars down. (*Pause.*) I want to go in swimmin'.

PHILIP (*moved to patting* STEVIE'S *shoulder*)

Buck up, Stevie. This is a funny old world. Lots of things can happen. I'll have to go now. (*Pause.*) All right, officer.

(*Enter* KENNEDY.)

KENNEDY

Have you finished your talk?

PHILIP

Yes, thank you. All through.

KENNEDY

Then come along, Stevie. (*To* PHILIP.) Can I be of any further service to you?

PHILIP

No. Thank you very much for your courtesy. 'Bye, Stevie. Keep your head up.

STEVIE

'Bye.

(*Exit* KENNEDY, STEVIE *and* PHILIP. *Enter* JERRY *by other door, cautiously.*)

JERRY (*calling hoarsely*)

Miss Janet, you all can come on in. He's done gone.

(*Enter* CLARICE.)

CLARICE

Did you find out what he wanted?

JERRY

He wanted to see Stevie.

(*Enter* JANET. *She sits by the table looking sad.*)

CLARICE (*to* JANET)

What are you moping about? He didn't ask for you, he came to see a prisoner.

JANET

I suppose he knows all about me now, all right. The whole shoddy story.

CLARICE

Why should he? There are a hundred Kennedy families in the State. He'd never connect you with—this. For heaven's sake quit worrying. Thank God he doesn't dream you live here. Just be glad he didn't run into you at the front door.

JANET (*stubbornly*)

I wish I had seen him. I wish I had made a clean breast of it all.

CLARICE (*vexed*)

Can't you see if you had met him here that everything would be over between you? As it is, the next time you meet him at least you can put a face on you.

JERRY (*gazing out window*)

Here he comes back!

(CLARICE *and* JANET *rise quickly with exclamations.*)

(*Peering.*) No'm, 'tain't. It's the mail man. The one who ain't got his uniform yet. Here comes Stevie's mammy, too. (*Exits.*)

CLARICE

With all your father's reforming, he's never been able to teach that one-armed creature any manners. (*Hearing* LAUREL *coming.*) I'm going to my room. This place is like the Union Depot. People coming and going. Noise like Bedlam. (*Exits.*)

(*A knock at the door. Enter* LAUREL WHITTAKER.)

LAUREL (*pausing on the threshold*)

Howdy!

JANET

Oh, it's you, Mrs. Whittaker. Sit down and rest. How are you to-day?

LAUREL

I air tol'able.

JANET

I know you are tired out. That's a long ride on horseback you have to make every time you come.

LAUREL

I left home 'fore sun-up.

JANET

I'll run down to the kitchen and get you a cup of coffee. Daddy'll be right in.

LAUREL

Much obliged.

(*Enter* KENNEDY.)

KENNEDY (*cheerfully*)

Good morning, Mrs. Whittaker. You are the second visitor Stevie's had this morning.

LAUREL

Howdy, jailer. Air they goin' to kill my boy?

KENNEDY

Now! Now! Now! We mustn't worry about Stevie. (*He puts his spectacles on and fishes in his vest pocket. He withdraws a clipping. He continues.*) The truth is, I'm a lee-tle disappointed this morning. At the news that come about Stevie. (LAUREL *looks at him helplessly as he stares at the clipping.*) I got this out of the *Courier* awhile ago. (*He reads aloud slowly.*) Curry versus Johnson—no, that's not it. Commonwealth versus Whittaker. Here it is—Cumberland County. Decision affirmed.

LAUREL (*harshly*)

What does that mean?

KENNEDY (*he puts the clipping down and sits on the edge of his chair holding his glasses and looking very compassionate*)

You see, it's like this: Stevie's lawyer asked for a new

trial. They took it to the highest court in the State fighting for a new trial. (*Tapping the clipping.*) This means that the high Court says "No." That these big judges think that Stevie had a fair trial and that he can't have another.

LAUREL (*hopelessly*)

What kin we do?

(*Enter* JANET *quietly. Seeing them engrossed and catching the drift of their conversation, she does not interrupt, but sets the coffee quietly on the table beside* LAUREL. LAUREL *leaves it untouched throughout the scene.* JANET *sits nearby with an expression of deep sympathy.*)

KENNEDY

I know things look bad, but there's one more chance. That's the Governor. We've got to work on the Governor. He'll be a tough nut to crack, because he's not a pardoning Governor, but here's what we're going to do. (*Pulls bulky petition out of his pocket.*) Get every man, woman and child to sign this. Beg the Governor to have mercy on your boy.

LAUREL

Tell the Gov'ner he ain't been in no trouble before. I tried to raise him right. But boys won't listen.

KENNEDY (*wistfully*)

A true word, ma'am. I've got a boy, too. A bit wild. But a good boy at heart—like yours. It's this cursed thing called fun that gets them into trouble. (*Brightens.*) But we'll keep a stiff upper lip. We're all going to work teeth and toe-nail for Stevie, and don't you forget it. The best thing you can do for him right now is to tell him the news of the mountains and be cheerful when you go in to see him. Chirk him up.

LAUREL (*gathering up her bundles*)

Take me in to see my boy.

(KENNEDY *precedes her into the hall. She trudges erectly after him. She pauses an instant to wipe the tears from her face with the back of her bare hand. Exit* LAUREL. KENNEDY *pauses on threshold.*)

KENNEDY (*to* LAUREL *as* JANET *beckons to him*)
I'll be with you in a second.
JANET (*hurriedly*)
Wait a minute, Daddy. The man who was here to see Stevie. I know him—did he—did you tell him anything about me?
KENNEDY (*surprised*)
Why no, child. He was here on business. (*Contritely.*) I didn't know you knew him or I would have called you.
JANET (*hastily*)
I didn't want to see him. It's all right—I just wondered.
KENNEDY
He looked like a nice lad. (*Kidding.*) But he was threatened with an accent. You know, that eastern lingo.
JANET (*straightening his tie; happily, kidding*)
I hope your tie wasn't crooked.
KENNEDY (*jingling his keys*)
I must go now and let that poor woman in to see her boy. (*Exits.*)
(CLARICE *enters by other door.*)
CLARICE
Any mail? Did the *Courier* come yet? I want to see the entries for to-morrow's races.
JANET (*abstractedly*)
I saw Daddy hand Jerry the paper. (*Calling to* JERRY.) Jerry, where's the *Courier?*
(*Enter* JERRY.)
JERRY
Boss took it in jail with him, while ago. (*When* JERRY *removes his hat upon entering the room, a letter remains on his head.*) Lordy, Miss Janet, I plumb forgot. That mail man gimme a letter along with *Courier*—
CLARICE (*exasperated*)
Jerry! Who is it for?
(JERRY *has been staring hard at the letter before giving it up. He is jerked to life at* CLARICE'S *tone.*)
JERRY
'Ats what I'm tryin' to find out. (*Hands letter to* JANET.)

It's fer you, Miss Janet. Thought mebbe it was for Stevie. (*Laughs.*) To be a boy what can't read er write 'at boy 'spects more mail than a Philadelphy lawyer.

(JANET *reads the letter.*)

CLARICE (*squelching* JERRY)

Do be quiet!

(JERRY *rambles toward the ferns still sniggering; with his empty sleeve he wipes his eyes that water easily. His hat he carefully places on his head.*)

JERRY (*bawls out the window*)

Hi, Buck! I wanna see you, Buck! (*Exits.*)

CLARICE

Pity Phil Lake couldn't see that! (*Insistently.*) Who's it from?

JANET

It's from Phil Lake, forwarded from Louisville.

CLARICE

Didn't I *tell* you? What has he to say? Read it to me.

JANET (*sardonically*)

He wants to see me again.

CLARICE

I thought he meant business. (*Impatiently.*) Is he coming to Louisville?

JANET

No.

CLARICE

Good Lord, does he ask to come here?

JANET

No.

CLARICE (*acidly*)

Well, do go and tell me what he says.

JANET

He's down in the mountains for a few weeks. He's planning a little houseparty and wants me to come. You're invited too.

CLARICE (*surprised*)

A party in the mountains? In November?

JANET

Oh, Aunt Clarice, it's lovely now. Why the leaves are all scarlet and gold, and the paths are covered with pine needles; it's just cool enough for a blazing fire in the evening—and a hunter's moon—

CLARICE (*meaningly*)

And Phil Lake!

JANET (*hoping to be understood*)

Yes. Phil Lake. A snatch of heaven. That's what it would be.

CLARICE (*cryptically*)

Heaven for you. Rheumatism for me. I know. You and he would be out hunting the hunter's moon. I'd be watching the fire.

JANET (*soothingly*)

Don't get excited. I'm not going.

CLARICE

Who is going to be there?

JANET

He's asked the Dickenson girls. He says they can play with a couple of engineers who are with him.

CLARICE (*impressed*)

The Dickenson girls. Why, their father is State Senator. And a widower, poor thing. (*Resolutely.*) Janet, we'll go.

JANET (*definitely*)

No, Aunt Clarice, I'm through with all that.

CLARICE

Draw up that chair, Janet. I want to talk to you. I feel sorry for you. You know what you want, but you're too —too romantic—to go after it. Now let me give you a few plain words.

(JANET *sits beside* CLARICE.)

CLARICE

I'm the only one in the whole family who ever married rich. Do you think my husband, your Uncle John—played a ukelele at me on a balcony?

(JANET *smiles.*)

Of course he didn't. I angled for him—and I didn't get discouraged. I got what I went after.

(JANET *turns away as if the subject were distasteful.*)

Now, there's no use blinking facts. Do you want to marry Phil Lake?

JANET

Oh, please! Aunt Clarice!

CLARICE

If you want to marry him, you can. It will be easy enough to land him. (*In an off-hand tone.*) Of course, if you don't intend to see it through, we'll stay right here at the jail and save my money.

(*Sounds and screams are heard from within the jail.* "This place is full o' snakes! Look at 'em. SNAKES!" *Another voice.* "He's done got de D. T.'s" *First voice.* "Take me out! Let me out!" "Crawling right at me." *Third voice.* "Boss! Oh, Boss! Bring this man a drink." "LET ME OUT." *More voices.* "Look at him! Bustin' his head again' the bars!")

(CLARICE *looks as though this is the final straw.*) My good GOD! They're driving me frantic! Haven't you had enough of this? Haven't you got backbone enough to get out?

JANET (*hopelessly*)

What can I do?

CLARICE

You can do one of three things. You can change it.

(JANET *shakes her head despairingly.*)

You can suit yourself to it—

JANET

No! No!

CLARICE

Or you can leave it.

JANET (*wearily*)

Oh, I wish I *could* leave it. I wish there were a way out. Sometimes I feel as though I'd do anything—

(*Enter* KENNEDY *in a great bustle.*)

KENNEDY

Janet, get me that quart of whisky—

CLARICE

What on earth is the matter?

KENNEDY (*searching for bottle*)

Fellow in jail's got the jimmies. A stiff drink will straighten him out—

CLARICE

Well, shut him up! People all over town can hear him—

KENNEDY (*exiting with bottle*)

He'll be quiet directly. I sent Geoffrey for Doc Sanders—

CLARICE (*closes the door*)

Well, Janet, which is it to be? Leave the jail? Or change it? Or suit yourself to it?

JANET (*mournfully*)

Oh, Aunt Clarice, you know I can do none of those things.

CLARICE

Come. We'll accept Phil Lake's invitation. And if you know what is good for you, Janet Kennedy, you'll pocket your silly pride, and marry him.

JANET (*shaken*)

But Aunt Clarice! You are taking too much for granted. Why, I'm not sure that he even cares for me—

CLARICE

Come, Janet, be honest. You know that you have only to shake the tree and the rich plum will fall into your lap.

JANET (*quickly*)

Be honest! That's just it! How can I be honest? You know as well as I, that if he knew I was a nobody—about this place—

CLARICE

Nonsense! Marry him and marry him quickly! Let him find out about all this afterward.

JANET

I love him and I want to see him again! (*To herself.*) Fool! Fool! Wanting a fool's paradise.

CLARICE (*seizing her opportunity*)

Fiddlesticks! Love is very well in its place, but what you need is a husband—

JANET

Aunt Clarice, I can't ask the man to marry me.

CLARICE (*quickly*)

But if he asks you to marry him—will you? I'm being practical for your own good, child, and I want you to promise me to wear a wedding ring before we leave the mountains.

JANET (*unhappily*)

Oh, what a way! But I'll do it!

CLARICE (*eagerly*)

You promise?

JANET

Yes. Yes. I promise. I'll vamp him. I'll lure him into the moonlight. Tramp lonely trails with him. Freeze with him in a canoe. Dance! Drug him! Anything! Let the future take care of itself.

(*As the curtain falls, the negroes in jail are singing a haunting song.*)

ACT II

TIME: *A week later; dusk in the Kentucky mountains.*

SCENE: *The interior of a one-room log cabin.*

For a little while, there is that peculiar hush which precedes a storm; the wind gradually rises and a storm, with rain, rages and beats outside the cabin; it increases in violence until after bedtime.

Though the cabin has but one room, it is substantially built—the logs are heavy and the beams stout. From the beams hang hanks of wool of different colors; strings of onions plaited together in fantastic fashion; strings of "burney peppers"; ears of red and yellow and white dried corn. A saddle hangs on a peg on the wall. A great wide-mouthed stone chimney. In the fireplace a bright log fire is burning. A basket on the hearth. Primitive cooking utensils hang nearby. Two beds with high wooden backs and covered with gay quilts; these beds are built monstrously high with feather ticks. A big wool wheel; a barrel; a rude bench; a stool; three or four straight-backed chairs of hickory with woven seats. A churn with an upright dasher. Candles. Several twists of tobacco used as decorations.

When the curtain rises, there is no one on stage. The door is slightly ajar when suddenly there steals into the room a mud-stained STEVIE. *He closes the door.*

STEVIE (*softly*)

Mammie! (*Listens. He looks all about and then runs over to the cupboard and gets out a cold corn pone. He bolts this as he walks around. With an ejaculation of pain he takes the heavy shoes off his swollen feet. As he*

sits on the side of the bed, he hears a woman's laugh. Panicky, he starts toward the door to barricade it, hears voices very close and then he darts up the ladder.)

(*Voices are heard offstage,* "This is the place.")

PHILIP (*knocking at the door*)

Any one home? (*He pushes the door open and looks in. Calls over his shoulder.*) There's no one home. (*Impatiently.*) I wonder where she is. I told her I'd be here to-day. We'll have to wait. You might as well come in, Janet.

JANET (*offstage*)

All right. (*Entering.*) I reckon they'll be back soon. (*Glancing around.*) Aren't these cabins old-fashioned? This is the third we've visited to-day and it's quaintest of all.

PHILIP

Surely she'll be back. (*Lighting a cigarette.*) Certainly is isolated. Some climb up that mountain, too.

JANET

This is the famous old Bald Mountain. Let's ride on to the top and come back later. We're only about halfway and I know the view is gorgeous.

PHILIP

If you don't mind, I think we'd better wait. We might miss her. I'm determined to get this option signed before I leave.

JANET (*smiling*)

You have a very firm chin. It's becoming. (*Her hands behind her.*) You know, Phil, if you wore nose glasses, a little white goatee and a grouch you'd look just like our banker, Judge Purdon.

PHILIP

I went to school with a chap named Monty Purdon. He was from Kentucky. Know him?

JANET (*uncertainly, on dangerous ground*)

Er—yes. Oh yes, I know him.

PHILIP

He's one of your beaux. You look guilty.

JANET (*seating herself*)
Nonsense! We've never been particularly friendly.

PHILIP
Tired?

JANET
Riding never tires me. I've grown up with horses. You know I was born on a farm.

PHILIP
Tell me about your old Kentucky home. What was it like?

JANET (*inventing*)
Well, there were acres and acres of blue grass. The longest avenue, bordered with elm trees, led up to the porch. And the house—our house—was of stone with huge white pillars in front. Each room so large that you could turn a horse and wagon around in it.

PHILIP
I should think you'd rather live there than in Louisville. I saw a house exactly like that when I drove through Harrodstown. Were you ever in Harrodstown?

JANET (*uncomfortably*)
Er—I've been through there. (*Changing the subject.*) I enjoyed the ride to-day.

PHILIP
You know it's awfully nice of you, Janet—to come along with me on these trips. It can't be very interesting to you.

JANET
Why, I love it! Besides, I'm interested in anything you are. Tell me how you happened to be an engineer.

PHILIP
Oh, I liked the work. I didn't want to be shut up in an office all day. But let's talk about you.

JANET (*laughing*)
It's a pretty deep subject. Where shall I begin?

PHILIP
Tell me anything—so it's about you.

JANET

Well, first of all I was born. Then I went to school—oh, just the usual things. Parties, and all sorts of frivolous things. Nothing interesting. I haven't even a marriage or a divorce to my credit.

PHILIP

You're so lovely! How did you ever escape? I wonder some Dixie boy hasn't gobbled you up. There must have been any number in love with you.

JANET

I've never had to call a traffic cop to keep them in line.

PHILIP

Oh, Janet, be serious. Is there any one? Are you in love?

JANET

Now what shall I say? If I say "yes"—you won't go on. If I say "no"—you'll be discouraged.

PHILIP

You must know it—that I'm crazy about you. Is there any one else? Tell me!

JANET (*hesitating and again inventing*)

Yes, there is a man. A year ago I promised to marry him. I thought I loved him then.

PHILIP

I see I've been all kinds of a fool. I took it for granted that you cared for me. (*With a change of tone.*) Oh, Janet, you aren't going to marry him! He couldn't love you as I do. No one could. Darling, I'm mad about you. Don't I mean anything to you?

JANET (*sincerely*)

You mean everything to me. I do love you.

PHILIP

But about this other man?

JANET

Why I don't know he's alive when you're around.

PHILIP

Oh, you darling! Kiss me. (*They do.*) When are we going to marry? Let's make it soon.

JANET

Oh, I'd love to slip off and marry you quietly without explanations to—(*pause, making up name*)—Jack or the family.

PHILIP

Then why can't we? (*Full of his plan.*) Listen, darling, you remember I told you I have to make a trip to Boston next week. You can come with me. We'll be married and I'll surprise mother with the sweetest Dixie bride a man ever brought home—I know mother will love you. You're the daughter she's always wanted.

JANET (*wistfully*)

Oh, I'd love to do it that way. (*With a change of tone.*) But your mother—maybe she won't approve of me.

PHILIP

Oh, she'll like you all right. She's a dear but a little hipped on family and the social register and all that rot. But you haven't anything to worry about—

JANET (*catching his arm*)

Oh, I'm thrilled, Phil. Your loving me. Going to Boston to live. Everything.

PHILIP (*jerked to life*)

Oh, but darling. There's one thing I haven't told you. (*Distressed.*) I must be fair and square with you. You've been so decent with me. I've signed a contract with my company to stay here in the mountains for two years. For me it would be perfect— But you— Will this make any difference to you?

JANET (*surprised*)

Two years? In the mountains?

PHILIP

I shouldn't ask a girl like you to rough it—

JANET

Oh, it isn't that. I'm just surprised.

PHILIP

It's selfish of me to even ask it. I suppose I could be released from my contract, but Janet, it's such a marvelous opportunity! And I love this work—

JANET (*putting her arm about him*)
I could live any place with you.

PHILIP
You darling! But I'm afraid you don't know what you're in for. It would be lonely at times. You are a wonderful little sport, but you've never known the least hardship. Your life has been one endless round of good times, and parties. There wouldn't be anything like that for two long years. . . .

JANET
But *we'd* be together-

PHILIP
You make me want to chuck the whole thing and take you abroad and give you everything you deserve.

JANET
I reckon my heart won't know whether it's Bald Mountain or Boston. It'll go on loving you wherever we are.

PHILIP
Oh, Janet, we're going to be happy. We'll have our vacations, and you can go home whenever you like. We'll fix up the lodge and when the hunting's right we'll have one grand houseparty. I want to meet all your friends. We'll have your father and Geoff down. It will be my job to make the old man like me and forgive me for snatching his pet daughter away from him.

JANET (*doubtfully*)
Just a minute, Phil. I think I should tell—

PHILIP
Yes, tell me. Do you love me? That's all I want to know.

JANET
Do I love you? Ever since that first day at White Sulphur I've loved you. So much that I thought I'd do anything to make you love me. (*With sudden resolution.*) Listen, Phil—
(*Wind, softly.*)

PHILIP (*happily*)
I can hear you say that every day. When you'll tell me

things you dream. "Listen, Phil!" When you're pouring coffee. "Listen, Phil. I love you."

(*There is silence. He caresses her. Her face indicates the struggle she is having.*)

JANET (*suddenly*)

Heavens! Phil! Look how dark it's getting. (*Then snuggles closer to him.*)

PHILIP (*holding her tightly*)

Yes. It's getting dark. The wind is rising. It's going to storm. We should be halfway back by now. But I can't break the spell.

JANET

Seriously, darling, we could never find our way back if it gets dark.

PHILIP (*rising*)

You're right. (*Goes to window.*) I'll simply have to make another trip.

JANET (*smiling*)

I'm glad we came.

PHILIP (*as they exit*)

I'm glad she wasn't here. (*At door. Wind, louder.* PHILIP *puts his hand on* JANET'S *arm, detaining her.*) Look at me.

(JANET *looks into his eyes.*)

Do you love me?

JANET

Yes.

PHILIP (*his arms down straight at his sides*)

Then kiss me.

(JANET *comes to him. She tiptoes and lightly kisses his eyes and lips.*)

(*Teasing.*) Is that the best you can do?

JANET

You silly!

(*She puts her arms about him and hugs him tightly, kisses him passionately.*)

PHILIP (*returning the embrace*)

That's better. Gosh, I'm happy. What have I ever done

to deserve you? Think of it, Janet! In less than ten days we'll be married. We'll belong to one another!

JANET (*half fearfully*)

It's too good to be true!

(*Exit* PHILIP *and* JANET.)

(*Offstage.*)

We'll have to make it snappy. Listen to the wind.

PHILIP (*offstage*)

All right!

(*Loud wind.*)

(STEVIE *creeps down the ladder cautiously. Latches the door. Peeps out window and sighs with relief when the retreating couple have faded from view. Goes to back door, whistles guardedly to his dog.*)

STEVIE (*almost under his breath*)

Hi, Rover! Hi, Rover! (*Snapping his fingers.*) Come on ole feller! (*Satisfied the dog is not there, he closes the door. Then his keen ears detect a sound, front. He dashes to the window, peeps out, his face lights. Goes to door, unlatches it, stands so it will shield him when open.*)

(*Rain starts.*)

(*Enter* LAUREL. *She wears an old-fashioned apron tied around her waist. It is full of ears of corn.*)

(*Stepping from behind door.*)

Mammy!

LAUREL (*letting the corn fall*)

Stevie! (*Huskily.*) How come? What do you mean, Stevie.

STEVIE (*holding her tight*)

I run away.

LAUREL

How did ye git away—

STEVIE

I got by Mr. Geoff when he's drinkin'—

LAUREL

Shoot ary body?

STEVIE

No. Jes' lit out to you, Mammy. (*She strokes his head.*)

LAUREL (*pitying*)

Ye're hungry.

STEVIE

No'm. I done et somethin'— Has the Shuruff been here?

LAUREL

No, but he'll come here fust thing when he gits the word.

STEVIE

Thar was a man an' woman here. Furriners. I knowed by their talk. I hid.

LAUREL

Hit was that man who's buyin' land.

STEVIE (*rapidly*)

Him that come to the jail house?

LAUREL (*poignantly*)

Oh, God! I done missed him. He war fetchin' the money. If we had it now hit'd aid ye to git to freedom. Shore they didn't see ye?

STEVIE

Sartin shore.

LAUREL (*incredulously*)

God's done answered my prayer. Yo're free! (*With fear.*) But they'll be after ye!

STEVIE

Ef they take me, they'll take me dead.

LAUREL

Yo're right. If needs be, die a-fightin'. Cheat the rope.

STEVIE

I done tolt ye, Mammy, they don't hang nobody. (*Wide-eyed.*) Hit's worse. (*Shaken.*) Feller in jail done told me. (*Mechanically, as though this chain of words has gone through his head a hundred times.*) They shave ye. They put a Sunday suit on ye. A feller pulls ye into death room. They make ye look at that air big chair. He shoves ye in it. An' hit burns ye alive, Mammy.

LAUREL

No! . . . No! Oh, Stevie, I ain't a-feared fer ye to die. But not—not that way!

STEVIE (*valiantly*)

Don't ye worry none. I done got this fur.

LAUREL (*anxiously*)

I misdoubt you ought to be here, Stevie. What do you aim to do?

STEVIE

I 'lowed I wanted to see you, Mammy, 'fore I took out for furrin parts.

LAUREL

You pore lonesome little ole critter. Don't know no more where you're goin' than a rabbit with a dog a chasin' it.

STEVIE

I heered a man a-talkin' about the sea and ships. I sort o' aim to make it to a ship that'll take me to furrin parts, whar nobody'll know nothin' 'bout me.

LAUREL

You ain't got money to go on nary vessel.

STEVIE (*holds out his hands*)

I got these. They know how to work.

LAUREL (*passionately*)

Oh, how air I goin' to let ye go? My heart's laid open at yore leavin'. (*Thinking.*) But hit ain't me now an' my sorrow. Hit's yore only chance. Bide here till mornin' when the storm's laid. I'll saddle the mare and go to the Gap. I'll find that man, and git the money. Ye can't travel fast with yore belly light.

STEVIE

Mammy, I ain't never been nothin' but trouble to ye since ye borned me.

LAUREL

Lord, Stevie, when a man child's laid in yore arms for the first time a mother's heart's so flooded with joy that a little of it stays with her all her life through. And yet someaways hit's made known to her, the first time she

looks deep into hits eyes, that she's a lookin' into a well o' sorrer. But Stevie, either way the cat jumps—joy or sorrer—a mother knows she's done drove a good bargain with the Lord. (*Wind.*) (*They hear footsteps outside.*) Shuriff!

(STEVIE *reaches for the gun in the corner—an old-fashioned shotgun.* LAUREL *motions him to drop it.*)

LAUREL (*almost whispering*)

Not yit. (*Pointing.*) Up thar. (LAUREL *thrusts the gun into the corner. A lusty knock is heard at the door. Rigidly.*) Who's thar?

VOICES

Doak and Cutty!

LAUREL (*with relief*)

Come!

(*Enter* DOAK AMMONS *and* CUTSHALL DAVIS.)

DOAK

Howdy, neighbor!

CUTSHALL

Evenin'.

LAUREL

Howdy. Rest yore hats awhile?

DOAK (*settling his firmly on his head*)

Reckon not. Don't aim ter tarry long—

CUTSHALL

This here shore air the down-pourin'est rain *ever* I seed—

LAUREL (*glancing out and up*)

Aye!

DOAK

I 'lowed last night that the weather'd break—hit war a clabber sky—

CUTSHALL (*to* LAUREL)

How air yore good health?

LAUREL (*abstractedly*)

Fair to middlin'—

DOAK (*conversationally*)

We 'lowed we'd drap in out of the rain—on our way 'crost the mountain—

CUTSHALL
Been down ter the store.

LAUREL (*tensely*)
Hear ary news?

DOAK (*scratching his head*)
Lemme think. Did ye hear 'bout Bill Tucker's ninth?

LAUREL
No— (*Somberly.*) I air glad ye come—I got—to tell ye somethin'.
(*The clatter of a horse's hoofs is heard.* LAUREL *runs to the window in apprehension.*)

CUTSHALL (*surprised*)
Jedgement an' Bellzybub! Who's that?

LAUREL
Hark!

DOAK
Hit's likely some traveler seekin' shelter—

PLINY (*offstage*)
Halloo!

DOAK (*recognizing voice, triumphantly*)
Hit's nobody but the Circuit Rider!
(*Reassured,* LAUREL *goes to the door to admit him.* CUTSHALL *whittles on a plug of tobacco, silently proffering a chew to Doak on the end of a big knife.*)
(*Enter* PLINY PARR.)

ALL
Even' Brother Parr. (*They pronounce it "Pare."*)

PLINY (*shaking his wet hat on the floor and hanging it on the churn dasher*)
Howdy, folks! Hit's settin' in ter rain—

DOAK
I knowed a storm war comin'— Heered a tree-toad a-singin'.

LAUREL (*relaxing a bit*)
Howdy, Preacher. Make yore self at ease.

PLINY (*settling himself*)
Much 'bleeged. I war mighty glad to see yore light a shinin'. That's right, let yore light so shine. The Bible

says don't hide yore light under no bushel. I been preachin' the Word a good many years and I ain't never seed no good come to nobody what hid their light under a bushel. What's the latest news o' Stevie?

LAUREL (*uncomfortably*)

He air tol'able.

CUTSHALL (*sourly*)

Stevie ort never to a-let his self be 'rested. Got no more sense than a wrenny-bird. He ort to a-took to his heels an lit out crost the rim o' the mountains mongst them furriners—

DOAK (*testily*)

I allers 'lowed Stevie made his mis-take when he killed old Benge on yon side o' the mountain. He orter shot the old whelp down in the holler—

CUTSHALL (*disapprovingly*)

Stevie hadn't orter been so feisty with his gun—he orter let shootin' to his elders. Hit nacherly ain't becomin' to a boy not yit a-votin' ter kill a man. Even if he needs killin'.

LAUREL (*hotly*)

Stevie knowed what he war a-doin'. That Goddamned old Benge told Stevie a tale on me—(*beating her breast*) On me! That's why he peppered him. An' he knowed damn well that Stevie ain't had nobody to fight fer Stevie but Stevie. I hope old Benge's soul is burning in hell!

PLINY (*shocked, rising*)

Sister Whittaker! I air ashamed o' ye! Cussin' same's a man! Don't ye know yore place 's a woman? A crowin' hen don't never come to no good end—neither does a cussin' woman!

(*Even the men are cowed.* LAUREL *sullenly throws fresh logs on the fire.*)

Shame! (*Judicially.*) Even if Stevie did have a right to shoot old Benge, you ain't got no right to cuss a-fore a sarvint o' the Lord. Shame!

(*Their attention is distracted for a moment by the storm. Wind and rain.*)

LAUREL (*to* PLINY)
I don't rightly know what I air a-sayin'— I air all tore up—(*they all look at her intently*). Stevie's done run off frum that jail house.

CUTSHALL
Clean gone?

DOAK
Godamighty!

PLINY
Praise the Lord!

LAUREL
You all got to holp us quick—

PLINY
Whar did he mek fer? Shore we'll help.

LAUREL (*going to foot of ladder*)
Stevie! Stevie! (*The men make various ejaculations.*) Come down. Hit's all right. Yore 'mongst friends— (*As* STEVIE *descends the ladder.*)

PLINY
That boy's jest like Paul. Angel tuck him by the hand.

DOAK
Done out-smarted 'em.

CUTSHALL
So fur he has—

PLINY (*shaking hands with* STEVIE *awkwardly*)
Howdy, son.

STEVIE
'Lo, preacher.

DOAK (*boisterously greeting him with a push*)
Well, Goddamn my soul!

STEVIE
Hi, Doak.

CUTSHALL (*nervously*)
How come you here?

STEVIE
I hadda come.

DOAK
Good God, Stevie, when you broke loose from the jail

house, why didn't you light out 'tother way? This ain't no place fer you!

CUTSHALL

When them damn Benges hear yore loose they'll lay fer ye and pump ye full o' lead.

STEVIE

Oh, I was a dryin' up in that jail house. I kep' dreamin' o' the mountains. I wanted to set foot back here. I ain't afeared o' the Benges. (*Change of tone.*) When I heard you all I thought shore hit war the shuruff.

PLINY

Son, let not yore heart be troubled. We air all got guns.

LAUREL (*deeply intent*)

He can't hide here—

PLINY

Stevie's 's safe here as ary place in the dad-burned world to-night—can't nobody ford Nollychucker a night like this—

CUTSHALL

Didn't *you* jest ford hit?

PLINY

Yah, but that was a hour ago. I misdoubt it could be—

DOAK (*oracularly*)

Shuruff lives on yon side o' the mountain. He's got to cross the crick at Hellbent Holler. Hit's a-boomin' by now. (*Spits conclusively.*) He can't ford hit.

CUTSHALL (*craftily*)

If he'd a-left four hour ago, he'd a-ben acrost by now. He could a-made hit to Nollychuck in four hour—

PLINY (*to* STEVIE)

How much o' a start did ye git, Steve?

STEVIE (*rapidly*)

I got 'way last night. But I don't 'low they'd 'a' missed me till mornin'. (*Proudly.*) I made right smart o' time—I hid part ways in the back o' a truck—

CUTSHALL (*cunningly*)

How's ary body goin' ter git the word in this section? Thar ain't but the one tellyphone an' hit's down to the

store. Ain't we jes' come f'm thar? Ain't no word come 'r we'd a-heered hit.

STEVIE (*matter of factly*)

I clum up an' cut the wire as I come by.

PLINY (*admiringly*)

The Lord holps 'em as holps theirselves. An' we aim to holp ye too. (*Patting his hip pocket significantly.*) Ye might just as well bide the night here. Give the crick a chance to fall. Nollychuck falls quick as hit rises. But when you light out, ye got to fly like yore shadder—

(*The rain is now driving in sheets against the two small cabin windows. A branch of a tree crashes against the eaves of the cabin. Suddenly there is the trampling of horses' hoofs. There is dead silence.*)

STEVIE (*panicky*)

Shuriff! I won't go. I'll kill him.

(*The mountaineers draw guns and assume defensive positions.*)

PLINY

Benges done smelt ye out—

(*A call*—"Hallo—halloo," *offstage.*)

LAUREL (*listening intently*)

Hit ain't no voice o' the mountains. (*Motions* STEVIE *up the ladder.*)

DOAK

Look sharp. Hit mought be a blind.

(*A loud knock at the door.*)

PLINY (*whispers*)

Ask who's thar.

LAUREL

Who's thar?

PHILIP (*offstage*)

Friends. Let us in.

PLINY

No, no, Laurel, don't let nobody in.

LAUREL (*turns to the men, urgently*)

Hit's that land-buyin' man. I done promised to sell him.

He's fetchin' the money. Stevie's bound to have money. I *got* to let him in.

PLINY (*to* LAUREL)

Let him in but get shet of him soon as ye kin. Wait a minute. (*Runs to ladder and calls softly to* STEVIE.) Lay low, son. We'll see ye through!

(LAUREL *opens the door wide. Enter* JANET. *Her clothes are drenched.*)

JANET (*wiping her dripping face*)

Oh, such a storm! I thought we'd never find shelter.

(*Enter* PHILIP.)

PHILIP (*to* LAUREL)

Good evening, Mrs. Whittaker. We were here before, but missed you. We started back to the hotel but we couldn't make it.

LAUREL

Come! (*Pause.*) If you brought that paper, I'll put my mark on hit right now.

PHILIP

Yes, I have it here. (*Slightly embarrassed.*) But I guess there's no hurry about signing it. It looks as though we will have to stay all night.

JANET

Oh no, Philip. We must go back.

PHILIP (*surprised*)

We can't get back a night like this. We've been lost already. We were lucky to get back here.

JANET

Maybe one of these men will guide us.

PLINY (*with alacrity*)

Shore, Doak thar's a good guide.

PHILIP (*considering*)

How are we going to cross the river? We got that far. But it was too dangerous to try to cross it. Why, tree trunks as big as the horses were being swept down. (*To* LAUREL. *Persuasively.*) You'll try to put us up?

LAUREL (*doggedly*)

I ain't got no room.

PLINY (*reflectively*)
Old Nollychuck *is* a-boomin' by now. (*Looking at* LAUREL *meaningly.*) Can't *nobody* (*meaning the officers*) ford hit. Give 'em shelter, Laurel. Good Book says "I was a stranger and ye tuck Me in." (*Meaningly.*) They can't do no harm.

LAUREL (*looking straight at* JANET *but addressing* PLINY)
You don't understand.

PHILIP (*pleadingly*)
I'll pay you anything you say.

LAUREL (*succumbing*)
I don't want no pay. Well, set a spell.

PHILIP
Thank you!

JANET (*hopefully; avoiding* LAUREL'S *eyes.*)
Maybe it will quit raining.

PHILIP
Before I dry out I want to see about the horses. Janet's went a little lame—
(DOAK *and* CUTSHALL *rise to go out with* PHILIP.)

DOAK (*oracularly as they exit*)
If a hoss hurts his foot, take a nail outen his shoe and throw hit into a lard can.

CUTSHALL
Whar's he hitched?

PHILIP (*exiting*)
Be right back, Janet—

PLINY (*rising suddenly*)
Wait a minute. I better have a look at them horses. Ef ye been ridin' hard I reckon them animiles need a leetle linnyment. Nails good, but linnyment's better. (*He goes over to the corner and gets his old kit. Takes out a Bible and then a great black bottle. Shakes it as he remarks*) I do a little hoss doctorin' as I preach the Word. Pays better.
(*Exit.*)

JANET (*running over to* LAUREL)
Oh, Mrs. Whittaker. I'm so glad you didn't say any-

thing—that is, that you didn't say you knew me. (*Hesitatingly.*) You see—I—I don't want the man I'm with to know where I live. I'm staying down at the Gap, and I—

LAUREL (*intent on her own problem*)

Ye say ye've just come from the Gap?

JANET (*intent on her difficulty*)

Yes. He doesn't dream I've ever seen you before— You see, we've been visiting a lot of mountain houses. I didn't know we were coming here.

LAUREL (*quickly*)

Have ye heered ary (*pauses significantly*)—news from home—

JANET (*quickly*)

Oh, how stupid of me. You want to know about Stevie. No, I haven't heard a thing. I'm sorry. I wish I did—(*Hearing the men return she continues rapidly.*)—Don't say anything about the jail before this man. (*Haltingly.*) I don't want him to know I live there. (*In a low voice, urgently.*) I can't explain now. (*Pleadingly.*) You won't say anything, will you?

(PLINY'S *voice heard on the outside.*)

PLINY

Give us a light out here. Laurel, got a lantern?

JANET

Oh, here! I have a flashlight— (*She runs out with the light leaving* LAUREL *alone for an instant.*)

LAUREL (*harshly*)

Brother Parr, come in here. Quick!

(*As* PLINY *comes into the room, he shouts over his shoulder.*)

PLINY

Rub hit down, like I tole ye. (*He enters.*)

(LAUREL *closes the door and stands before it.*)

LAUREL (*hurriedly*)

That feller knows Stevie. He's done been to the jail house to see him 'bout the land. The gal knows him too.

PLINY
Godamighty!
LAUREL
What we goin' ter do? We can't git him out afore 'em. Had he ort ter light out right now?
PLINY (*thinking; finally*)
Naw. He can't git no whar to-night—
LAUREL (*hopefully*)
Reckon we kin git him out towards mornin'—when they're asleep?
PLINY (*deeply intent*)
They mought be light sleepers. (*With sudden exultation he catches* LAUREL's *arm.*) With the Lord's aid, we'll git the boy a-past 'em. (*Hurriedly as voices are heard on the outside.*) Got ary corn liquor?
LAUREL
Shore.
PLINY
Stout? Like ye gimme last time?
LAUREL
Same.
PLINY
Git hit out direckly. Let 'em sample hit an' I'll warrant ye that they'll sleep. Sound!
(*Enter* DOAK *and* CUTSHALL.)
DOAK
They shore air been travelin'. Sweat them thar hosses moughty nigh to death.
CUTSHALL (*calling back out the door*)
Ye'd best let well enough alone—
LAUREL (*tensely*)
Shet that door, Cutty—
PLINY (*to the men*)
We got ter git Stevie away from here fore daybreak. That gal's from the jail house whar he bust loose from—
(CUTSHALL *whistles guardedly.*) They both know him.
DOAK (*his hand on his hip pocket*)
They spies?

PLINY (*impatiently*)

Naw. But they dassent see him. Lissen to me. Holy Sperrit shed a light on me. The way to out-smart 'em. Laurel's got to git her money. We got to git Stevie away. What we'll do is this: soon's we git the money we'll git 'em blind-drunk. When the storm's laid, we'll git Stevie out.

LAUREL (*anxiously*)

What ef they smell a mouse?

PLINY (*the master brain*)

Don't let on anything's botherin' you. Make friends with 'em. I'll act the fool. Yo'all jine in. We'll sing an' dance and make merry all the while. Give 'em plenty to drink and I'll warrant ye, they won't make no trouble.

DOAK

Count on me!

CUTSHALL

Now don't you go too fur, Doakie. Don't want ter lay 'em up fer a week.

PLINY (*wisely*)

They'll be all right in the mornin'. Yo'all leave hit ter me.

(STEVIE *is seen, hanging two-thirds out of the hole in the ceiling.*)

STEVIE (*in a hoarse whisper*)

Air they gone?

(*Hearing* JANET *and* PHILIP *returning,* PLINY *waves his arms frantically at* STEVIE.)

PLINY

Fer God's sakes, git back thar!

LAUREL (*angrily*)

Shet yore mouth, Stevie—

(DOAK *and* CUTSHALL *shoo him back, their arms going like propellers.* JANET *and* PHILIP *enter.*)

PLINY (*loudly, to cover up his plot*)

Jehovy shore air a fannin' the yearth to-night. Never seed sech a wind.

(LAUREL *opens a small old chest and takes out a coarse but clean gingham dress and a pair of slippers.*)

LAUREL

You're soaked through. Wear these 'ere. They war my gal's.

JANET

Thank you. (*Seeing there is but one room in the cabin.*) Where shall I go?

LAUREL (*matter of factly*)

Over thar 'hint the bed.

(JANET *does so.*)

PHILIP (*taking off his windbreaker*)

My name is Lake.

PLINY

My name is Pliny Parr. Reckon you heard of me. I been preachin' in these parts upwards o' fifteen years. These here boys air Doak Ammons and Cutshall Davis.

LAUREL (*looking at* PLINY)

Reckon I better fix a snack to eat. (*Half questioningly.*) 'Low you air all hungry.

PLINY

Good idee. My stummick says hit's supper time.

CUTSHALL

Mine, too.

DOAK

My belly air saying how-de-do to my backbone.

PLINY

What road did you come, son?

PHILIP

We started out on Wilderness Road, then we turned off at a place called Rock House.

DOAK (*to* PLINY *and* CUTSHALL)

Rock House? Um—m—m. (*Suddenly.*) I know whar ye war. Lor' ye shore been travelin' outten your way. Now what ye ort 'a done war this. Ye ort went to Trace Branch—that's the right fork o' Troublesome Crick. Then ye orter turnt ter yore left fer a mile to the mouth o'

Leatherwood. Thar ye would a seed a stump with a arrer on hit—

CUTSHALL (*puffing vigorously*)

No! Ye're wrong, Doak. Last time's I war at Court, I come home that away, but I tuck out 'crost Wolf an' Coon to the headwaters o' Owl Nest—

PLINY (*derisively*)

Owl's Nest! Lor', Cutshall, you orter knowed that ain't no fitten place to travel this time o' year. Ye can't ford Owl now—

(JANET *emerges from behind bed dressed in calico dress.*)

JANET (*to* LAUREL *after glancing around*)

Can't I help you?

LAUREL (*to* JANET)

You kin lay the plates.

PLINY

Stranger, I'll tell ye how ter git back ter the Gap when ye start. Fust ye go down the mountain—left side—an' at the foot o' the mountain ye'll come crost a purty bad road . . . but ye keep right on a-goin' and cross Middle Fork. Hit'll likely be a-boomin' after this rain, but the hosses'll swim hit, I reckon. Then up Flackey crost a right rough little hill ter Greasy Neck. Ye'll know hit's Greasy Neck because of the schoolhouse. Then ye foller Stoney to hits head—

PHILIP (*bewildered*)

Say, wait a minute—

PLINY (*earnestly*)

Foller the least branch on yon side to Dead Man's Gulch; right through to Lion Fork. (*Admonishingly.*) Don't forget when ye git to Cutshin, you don't want ter git mixed up—Cutshin's jest like a snake. Ye cross hit three times, the head, the middle, and the tail— (*Sniffing the meat and seeing supper is almost ready, he forsakes his directions to call out.*) Laurel, cook me eight slices, whilst ye're a-cookin'.

PHILIP

I'm glad to learn these roads, I'm going to be in the mountains for some time.

LAUREL

Doak, hand me that piggin to put these here 'lasses in, will ye?

(DOAK *reaches for a piggin hanging on the wall and silently hands it to* LAUREL. JANET *places the food on the table.* PHILIP *watches her admiringly. He starts to take a plate from her—*)

PLINY

Shore nuff, you got plenty to learn.

LAUREL

Yore meal's ready. Fetch yore cheers up-side.

(*They draw up chairs, bench, stool and seat themselves in ridiculous positions,* JANET *and* PHILIP *sit on the bench, side by side.*)

PLINY

Short grace ternight, folks. Lord be thanked fer a good meal and shelter. (*In the same breath.*) Hand me the bacon, sister.

(*Pause. To* LAUREL.)

Did ye hear 'bout Fess McQueen's hawgs all bein' down with the cholery?

(PHILIP, *who has been about to take some bacon, refrains and passes it to* CUTSHALL *who helps himself generously.* JANET *blanches. The mountaineers eat noisily with much smacking of lips and great relish.*)

LAUREL

No, I never heered nothin' 'bout hit.

PHILIP (*to the company*)

This trip has been one great experience—

JANET (*to* PLINY)

You have wonderful country up here.

(*No response from the mountaineers.*)

PLINY

The Good Book 'clares that all the mountains shall be leveled and the valleys shall be filled up.

CUTSHALL (*pauses; sourly*)
I never did believe that. Stands to reason that them air mountains air here to stay.

DOAK
Godamighty, I don't want to be standin' on top o' old Bald Mountain when the Lord starts shovelin'.

PLINY (*turning to* CUTSHALL)
Cuttie, that's anarchist's talk. Don't you know Bald Mountain ain't no more than God's footstool an' he can kick it over when ever He wants to? The Devil's ben stirrin' 'round these mountains. The first thing I know you'll be narratin' that all our grandpappies sprung from monkeys!

CUTSHALL (*doggedly*)
Tadpole turnt to er frog—

DOAK
With my own eyes I seed horsehairs turn into snakes!
(PHILIP *laughs at this.* JANET *smiles.*)

PLINY (*seriously, turning on* PHILIP)
'At's true. But oncet I traveled four days down to Pikesville to a circus. I seed a monkey mammy an' her young un. An' they's both monkeys. Use your mother-wit. Like breeds like. Cats don't have pups nor cows don't have colts. (*To* PHILIP.) Ain't that the truth?

PHILIP
You're right.

PLINY
Shore, I'm right. (*Stretching.*) I feel like a Thanksgiving turkey. Stuffed up ter my years—Well, if thar ain't a dulcimer! (*He pronounces it "dul-seemer."*) I allers liked a dulcimer—fiddle too. (*He strums a bit.*)
(JANET *and* PHILIP *light their cigarettes.* LAUREL *and the others light their pipes.*)
(*Wind.*)

PHILIP (*in an undertone to* JANET)
You're lovely in that funny dress. It's fun being here like this.

JANET
I'm afraid Aunt Clarice will be awfully worried.
PHILIP (*grasping* JANET'S *hand*)
I found Heaven in these mountains!
PLINY
Glad ye believe in Heaven, young man. Most city fellers believe in Heaven, but haw, haw, when hit comes to hell-fire an' brimstone—they shet their eyes—(*singing and strumming song: "Listen to the Nightingale Sing."*)
PLINY
How air that fer a tune?
JANET
Fine!
PHILIP
Great!
PLINY (*shamelessly*)
There's more to hit yet. (*Singing.*)
(JANET *and* PHILIP *applaud. The others look pleased.*)
JANET
Won't you sing something else?
PLINY
My fingers is all stiffened up with rheumatiz. Here, Doak, play "Sourwood Mountain."
DOAK
Don't keer if I do. Come on, fellers, we'll all jine in.
(DOAK *plays and the mountaineers sing, beat time with feet, slap thighs, etc.*)

"I've got a girl at the head of a hollow,
Hay, did yum, dium dum day,
She don't come, and I won't follow.
Hay didyum, didyum dum day.

"Old man, old man, I want your daughter.
Haydidyum didyum, dum day.
To bake me bread and carry me water.
Hay didyum, didyum, dum day."

PHILIP (*applauds*)
I like that! Keep it up!

PLINY

Nope, yore turn now—

PHILIP (*laughs*)

I can't sing. You'd throw me out if I tried to sing.

(DOAK *passes the dulcimer to* PLINY *who proffers it to* JANET *who takes it hesitantly.*)

JANET

But I never played a dulcimer.

PLINY (*authoritatively*)

Jest like a guit-tar!

(JANET *strums.* CUTSHALL *whittles.* DOAK *tilts his chair against the wall.* LAUREL *noiselessly clears off the table.* PHILIP *leans over* JANET *adoringly.*)

LAUREL

Little gal, I seed ye a shiverin'. Likely ye'll take down with a coughin' cold. (*Reflectively.*) Mebbe I better fix ye a tea o' yeller dock, pennyrile an' Injun turnip.

(JANET *is terrified at this proposed concoction.*)

JANET

Please don't bother. I feel all right. Really, I—I—

PHILIP (*sneezing*)

I beg your pardon.

PLINY

What fur? Ye couldn't holp hit!

(DOAK *and* CUTSHALL *now sneeze and blow a series of loud croupy sounds.*)

LAUREL (*decisively*)

I reckon nobody'll be the worse off fer a little o' what's knowed 'round here as "Tem'p'rance Tipple."

(*She goes over to a corner and gets an old gallon stone jar and a gourd, which is used as the common dipper.*)

PLINY

I air a-achin' all over fitten ter kill. Well! The Good Book says yore body is the temple of the Sperret an' hit's common hoss sense fer a body to know the Almighty wants ye to take keer o' yore temple.

JANET (*startled*)

I never drank any of this before. I hear it's strong.

PLINY (*persuasively*)
Tain't too stout. Hit'll do you good!

CUTSHALL (*to* PHILIP)
Hit's a pore drink that ain't got no wallop!

PLINY
Jest a minute! 'Fore we start drinkin' moonshine, better git yore business done, Laurel.

PHILIP (*reaches in his pocket, withdraws document*)
That's right. (*To* LAUREL.) You haven't changed your mind about selling, have you?

LAUREL (*sadly*)
Hit's unknown how I hate to sell. But needs must when the devil drives.

PHILIP (*quickly*)
You understand I'm not forcing you to sell—

LAUREL
I'm in sore need.

PLINY
Be shore fer certain, Sister Whittaker, that yo're dealin' with a honest man.

PHILIP
You're not taking any chances. Ask the people at the bank at the county seat about me. My company is offering a fair price and everything is to be aboveboard and lawful.

CUTSHALL (*morosely*)
Young man, you can set no law on us! We carry our own law (*slapping his hip pocket*), and if ye don't give this widder woman all 'ats comin' to her, we'll fill you an' yore company full er lead—

DOAK
We'll take it out o' yore hide—

LAUREL (*pacifying them*)
Hit's all right. I've knowed him a pretty while. First day I seed him a spider drapped on his coat.

CUTSHALL (*impressed*)
Sho' nuff?

PLINY (*good humoredly*)
Reckon hit's all right then.

DOAK
That's *shore* good luck.

PHILIP (*painstakingly*)
Now you see this is an option. That is, you promise not to sell your land to any one else for six months. All you have to do is sign this—or put your mark here.

LAUREL
You got ary quill? I'll make my mark.

PHILIP (*taking out his fountain pen*)
Yes. I'll write here "Laurel Whittaker, her mark." All you have to do is to touch the pen.
(LAUREL *starts to touch the pen.*)

PLINY (*remonstrating*)
Jest a minute, Sister Whittaker! Don't tech no quill 'thout you gotta onion in yore pocket. Worst kind er luck!

LAUREL (*to* JANET)
Fetch me a red onion outen that crock over yonder.
(JANET *gets the onion, hands it to* LAUREL. LAUREL *thrusts it into her pocket and touches the quill.*)

PHILIP
Here's a check for a hundred dollars to bind the contract. (*There is a pause and a gloomy silence. Puzzled.*) What's the matter?

LAUREL (*harshly*)
This ain't ary money. Tain't nothin' but paper.

PLINY (*severely*)
She don't want none o' yore antics!

PHILIP
Why, this is a certified check. It's the same as cash.

CUTSHALL (*in slight commotion*)
No it ain't!

DOAK
Reckon we know money when we see it.

PHILIP (*taking out his bill folder*)
Oh, you want cash. I don't know if I have a hundred dollars with me.
(*The mountaineers look on suspiciously as he counts his money.*)
Yes, I have.
(*He hands the bills to* LAUREL.)
LAUREL (*thrusting the money into her bosom*)
Much oblige.
PLINY (*significantly*)
You see, Sister Whittaker, the Lord pervides for his own. Even to the sparrow on the house top.
DOAK
We'll seal the trade with some o' Laurel's licker.
PLINY
Hand it 'round, Laurel.
LAUREL
Yo're welcome to it. (*To* PHILIP.) Six gulps to ye. (*To the mountaineers.*) I'll give her three swallers (*nods to* JANET) and take a snort myself, and the rest o' ye can please yoreselves.
JANET
Just a little for me.
PLINY (*to* LAUREL *as* JANET *drinks*)
Don't give me mor'n a quart at one drinkin'. Mought fly to my head.
LAUREL (*drinking*)
This here's good for a body— (*Sighs.*) Some hit makes happy. Some hit makes fight. Some hit makes—fergit.
DOAK (*slyly*)
Some—hit puts to sleep—
(PLINY *drinks one gourdful with an ah-ing sound and passes the gourd to* DOAK, *who drinks down a like amount without stopping.* CUTSHALL *has one gourdful and hands it back for another.*)
That's a right peppery po'tion.
PLINY
Air it sugar-sweetened?

LAUREL

Naw. Sorghum.

(PHILIP *is looking adoringly at* JANET *and murmuring. The liquor has put him in gay spirits.*)

CUTSHALL

What else did ye use—hit's purty good—

LAUREL (*indifferently*)

'Sides the sorghum I tuck a bushel o' corn, four plugs 'baccy, four pound o' polk berries, two pounds o' sody and the full of a mug o' lye and, o' course, water to distill.

PHILIP (*feeling the effects*)

The famous mountain dew! I like it.

JANET (*in a low tone*)

Be careful! I'm light-headed after one drink.

LAUREL (*to* JANET)

Ye're drinkin' puny. (*Generously.*) Drink all ye want!

PLINY

Come along, sister, 'tain't goin' to pizen ye.

(JANET *takes another swallow while* PHILIP *drinks again.*)

JANET (*gayly*)

I feel—so "I don't care!" You know—like when you are riding the waves—so irresponsible—

PHILIP (*impulsively putting his arm around her*)

My *dear!* You are the loveliest thing in the world!

(DOAK *and* CUTSHALL *exchange a solemn wink.*)

PLINY (*also enlivened by the liquor*)

Dog take hit! That dulcimer air brought back old time afore I war a-preachin'. (*Slapping his thigh.*) Brethren and Sisters! Likely ye heered what a wild buck I war —I 'low I war like Paul in the Good Book. He war a plum sight too—afore he got religion. (*The others laugh boisterously.*) I rec'lict oncet I throwed a live snake right in the middle of a meetin' o' Foot-Washin' Baptists! (*Jubilantly.*) I shore war a sinful man. Danced! Used ter dance like that hussy afore Punishus Pilate, who fetched in pore John the Baptist's head. (*Shakes his head.*) Pore John! (*He walks straightly and solemnly to* JANET *and*

thrusts the dulcimer into her hands.) Play me a breakdown! Jest wanter show ye how sinful I war.

(JANET *gayly plays a lively tune.* PHILIP *sits beside her.* PLINY *fishes a large bandana handkerchief from his pocket, wipes his face, blows his nose, and gives a very good breakdown, shuffling heel and toe in his great boots.* DOAK *and* CUTSHALL *keep time and slap their thighs and cry at intervals.*)

CUTSHALL

Tumawingwawaddle!

DOAK

Jumpo'erthebara! Hooketyclink!

(*They are all boisterous except* LAUREL.)

(*When the breakdown is ended,* PLINY *falls into his chair. He sits fanning himself with his handkerchief.*)

PHILIP

Good!

JANET

That was great!

DOAK

Don't git winded.

CUTSHALL (*morosely*)

Brother Parr, take care. You'll git a swimming in the head.

PLINY

I air a little light-headed. Ain't nothin' like a dance an' a drink to git you fuddled.

LAUREL (*quickly*)

Have some more tipple.

CUTSHALL (*indicates to* LAUREL *to give* JANET *another drink.*)

I never say no.

PHILIP (*gayly*)

Nor I. Here, Janet, give me your cup.

JANET

No, thank you. No more for me.

LAUREL (*taking* JANET'S *cup from* PHILIP *and filling it*)

Drink deep. Both o' ye. Hit wards off chills and fever.

CUTSHALL (*to* JANET)

This shore is newmony weather. Better pertect yourself.

JANET (*taking the cup from* LAUREL *hesitantly*)

I really don't—

PHILIP (*in good spirits*)

That's right. Whatever ails you—this is the cure. Bottoms up *everybody.* (*To* JANET, *in an undertone*) You needn't worry. I'll look after you. (*They all drink.*) (*Looking at* DOAK *and* CUTSHALL.) Who's next on the program for a dance?

PLINY (*loudly*)

Ye young uns! Git out thar an' shake a leg! Show us how they dance out yonder—out thar in the valley whar ye come from—

JANET (*languorously*)

Dance! Surely. We'll show you how we dance—out there. Won't we, Phil?

(*They start to dance:* PHILIP *pauses, his arm around her.*)

PHILIP

Just a minute! I ask you. Isn't she the most beautiful girl in the world? Honestly, now did you ever see a prettier girl? (*Confidentially.*) You wonder how we got lost? I'll tell you! This is my sweetheart and to-day she promised to marry me!

PLINY

Betrothed! drink 'em good luck!

(*They all drink.*)

DOAK (*singing loudly*)

"Fer I took a notion ter marry
Why, God-in-Heaven knows!"

PHILIP (*laughing, raising his gourd*)

I'm glad we are here. (*Drinks to* JANET.) To my Dixie girl!

DOAK *and* CUTSHALL

Hooray!

PLINY (*jubilantly*)

Dance!

(*As* PHILIP *and* JANET *dance.*)

DOAK
Ain't that a plum sight?

CUTSHALL
Mountain boys an' gals dance more frolicsome—

PLINY
I call that plain squeezin'—

LAUREL
Hit's purty.

PHILIP (*to* JANET)
How I love you!
(*They dance slowly to an old waltz which* PLINY *tinkles out on the dulcimer.* PHILIP *kisses her.*)

JANET
I love you and love you—and love you!

PHILIP
You are so different, darling—from other girls—

JANET
Tell me more. (*She sways slightly, recovers herself and then says, surprised.*) Oh, I'm dizzy. Let's sit down.

DOAK (*to the company as he drinks*)
Good luck comin' to this house. A betroth-ed pair allers brings good luck. Drink again!
(*The mountaineers drink boisterously.* JANET *sinks down on a bench near the table.*)

JANET
Oh, I feel so queer. I'm sleepy.

PHILIP
You'll be all right. Put your head on my shoulder, like this. Now, that's better.
(*With her head on* PHILIP'S *shoulder,* JANET *drops off to sleep.* PHILIP *caresses her.*)
(*Rain slowly stops.*)

PHILIP (*surprised*)
She's asleep. Poor kid, she's tired. No wonder, we've ridden miles.

DOAK (*significantly*)
Done flickered.

LAUREL (*indicating the beds that are in the corner "back to back"*)
Better lay her on the bed. I'll git her a nightgown by and by.

PHILIP (*picking* JANET *up*)
I'll do it.
(*He stumbles slightly.*)

CUTSHALL (*quickly*)
I'll holp you.
(*They place her on the bed.* CUTSHALL *takes hold of her as though she were a sack of meal; he dusts his hands off when through.*)

PHILIP (*putting his hand to his head*)
Thank you.

DOAK (*hospitably*)
Have another drink.

PHILIP (*pepped up*)
All righto. (*He drinks again.*) Some kick. (*Looking at* JANET. *He goes over to the bed.* JANET *stirs and sighs heavily.* PHILIP *leans over her, petting her head and kissing her. Tenderly.*) Never mind, darling. I'm going to sit right here by you all night. I'll take care of you. (*The mountaineers look at each other in consternation. A significant pause.*)

DOAK (*yawns loudly and widely*)
'Clar' I'm gittin' terrible sleepy. How 'bout you, son?

PHILIP
Not a bit.

PLINY (*positively*)
Stranger, hit's bedtime fer the mountains. We'll all swaller 'nother drink and go to bed. Good Book says "Sleep ye now an' take yore rest." Have a drink!

PHILIP (*taking another drink*)
No bed for me to-night— (*An unmistakable noise from the loft of the cabin causes a dangerous pause. The mountaineers are aghast,* PHILIP *looks up, startled.*) Hello! What was that?

PLINY (*with consternation*)
Lordy goshen!

LAUREL
Hit's the wind throwed a limb on the roof—

PHILIP
But the wind has fallen. It's stopped raining—funny! Sounded to me like some one moving about—

LAUREL (*hastily*)
No. Moonshine makes a buzz in yore ears.
(*A loud sneeze is heard from the loft.*)

PHILIP
What's it all about? There certainly is somebody up there—

DOAK (*clumsily*)
Nothin' but screechowl. (*Betraying his anxiety.*) Have another drink.

PHILIP (*puzzled*)
No, I don't want any more to drink. You're trying to put something over on me. There *is* some one up there!

PLINY (*quietly, imperiously*)
Stranger, if ye want to bide the night here, ye better not hear so many noises. Either go to bed and shet your eyes, or clar out.

PHILIP (*his suspicions aroused. The light dawning*)
There's something wrong here. What do you mean—"Clear out?"

DOAK
Just this—shut up or git out!

PHILIP (*thoroughly aroused*)
Like hell I will! If you think you can bully me, you're mistaken. If there wasn't something up, you wouldn't be so damned anxious to get rid of me.

PLINY (*walking around in a threatening manner*)
The mountains don't 'low no meddlin'. You git out!
(CUTSHALL *opens the door and stands there.*)

PHILIP (*angrily*)
Leave her? Here? I should say not!

(*All the time the dispute is taking place,* LAUREL *stands at the foot of the ladder.*)

(PLINY *starts toward* PHILIP.)

PLINY

Go!

(PHILIP *whips out a revolver from his hip pocket. In a flash there is a shot;* PHILIP'S *gun is shot out of his hand by* DOAK. *There is a free-for-all fight, with* PHILIP *giving a good account of himself.*)

LAUREL

Don't kill him!

PHILIP

Take your hands off me.

PLINY

I'll show you how to draw a gun!

CUTSHALL

Git him down!

PHILIP

Take that, damn you!

DOAK

Hit him in the belly!

LAUREL

Take keer!

DOAK

Jesus God! He's strong!

PLINY

Stop hit!

PHILIP

I'll beat your brains—

(PLINY *gives him a terrible thump with the butt-end of his gun.*)

CUTSHALL

That got him.

PLINY

He's asleep now, aye God.

STEVIE (*running down the ladder*)

God, you done kilt him?

DOAK
Naw. He'll come to.
PLINY
Boy, you got to light out right away.
LAUREL
We got to part.
STEVIE
I kin make hit to New River by daybreak.
DOAK (*hurrying out*)
We'll set out fust.
CUTSHALL (*almost on a run*)
If ever thing's clar we'll give three sharp whistles. Bye, Stevie.
DOAK
Good luck! Bye.
STEVIE (*rushing around the cabin*)
Bye. Much oblige.
PLINY
Take his horse. Ride like hell.
STEVIE (*picking up* PHILIP'S *coat*)
I will. I'll wear this coat.
LAUREL
Brother Parr, give me a hand. Help me hist him on the bed. Put some victuals in your pocket, Stevie.
(STEVIE *does this as* LAUREL *and* PLINY *place* PHILIP *on the other bed.*)
(*Three shrill whistles are heard.*)
STEVIE
I air gone.
LAUREL
Wait! You ain't got the money. (*She thrusts the money* PHILIP *has given her into his hand.*)
PLINY (*excitedly*)
God quicken yore heels, boy. Run.
STEVIE
Bye, Brother Parr—
(LAUREL *holds him close for an instant. They kiss without tears.*)

STEVIE (*choked*)
Bye, Mammy—
LAUREL (*as* STEVIE *exits*)
Git me word from you someaways—
PLINY (*comfortingly*)
Take heart, sister. The Lord's with him. He air got money and a gun.

Curtain

ACT III

TIME: *The next morning about 8 o'clock.*

SCENE: *Same as Act II.*

When the curtain rises PHILIP *and* JANET *are in their respective beds. The sun is streaming in the cabin windows.* JANET *stirs, then sits up in bed. She is amazed to find herself in a nightdress and waking in a strange room. Bewildered, she rises, goes over to water-bucket and takes a drink. Holds her head a moment. She looks slowly around and discovers* PHILIP *in bed, sound asleep. She glances at her gown, resolves to dress quickly before he wakes. Searches for her clothes; futile; baffled, she returns to her bed, sits up.*

JANET (*calling softly*)

Phil! Phil! (*No response. Then more loudly.*) Phil! Wake up! (*Still no response. Cupping her hands and shouting.*) Hoo—oo—oo, Phil Lake! WAKE UP! (*No response. Frightened, she mutters aloud.*) My Lord, what can be the matter with him? (*She rises, goes over to his bed, her long, yellowed, old-fashioned gown trailing. She shakes him.*) Phil! *Please* wake up. (PHILIP *stirs, groans, mutters unintelligibly. Persistently.*) Phil! Something's happened. You must wake up.

PHILIP (*crossly*)

Let me alone.

JANET (*shaking him again*)

Oh, darling, PLEASE wake up. I can't find my clothes.

PHILIP (*sleepily, thickly*)

What you say?

(JANET *goes to water-bucket, pours a little water in the cup of her hand; goes over and sprinkles his face.*)

JANET (*also crossly*)

What's the matter? Why won't you wake up?

PHILIP (*the cold water irritating him*)

Don't do that!

JANET

Are you sick?

PHILIP

Um. My head! (*Pulls himself up on one elbow, surprised.*) Janet! (*Pause.*) Oh, now I remember! (*Rises, painfully.*)

JANET (*anxiously*)

What's the matter with your head?

PHILIP

We had a fight here last night. One of them hit me on the head.

JANET

A fight? Why, the last thing I remember, we were dancing. Where is Mrs. Whittaker?

PHILIP

I don't know.

JANET

You'll have to find her. Look at me. I don't remember undressing.

PHILIP

That mountain dew put you to sleep.

JANET (*seriously*)

No. I passed out. They could have shot you and I wouldn't have heard it. What was the fight about?

PHILIP

Something funny was going on around here last night. I got suspicious. They wanted to throw me out. I wouldn't leave. This is what happened. (*He takes a drink from the dipper. He is minus his boots, is very disheveled, his hair tousled, bleared eyes and a lump on his head.*)

JANET (*annoyed*)
Oh, I wish Mrs. Whittaker would come. I *must* find my clothes.
(*They hear noise outside; some one talking.*)
PHILIP (*relieved*)
Here she comes now.
(*Outside:* "You can wait around. I may need you.")
(PHILIP *and* JANET *look at one another in dismay.*)
JANET (*panicky*)
AUNT CLARICE!
(CLARICE *knocks. There is no response.* JANET *puts her finger to her lips.*)
PHILIP (*whispering*)
Where are my boots?
CLARICE
Any one in? (*Pause.*) May I come in?
JANET (*looks about wildly*)
My clothes! Don't let her in!
PHILIP (*calling*)
Just a minute!
(*Enter* CLARICE. *The door is unlocked,* PHILIP *looks for boots,* JANET, *panicky, has jumped back in bed. She is sitting up, a scarlet blanket drawn about her.*)
CLARICE (*dazed*)
Janet! You're safe! Oh, thank God!
JANET
Aunt Clarice!
CLARICE
I've been looking for you. Since dawn. Were you in the storm? Are you all right?
JANET
Yes. I—
CLARICE (*wonderingly*)
Where were you last night?
JANET
Here.

CLARICE (*bewildered, unbelieving*)
You mean you two spent the night here? (*Hopefully.*) Then I'm to understand you're married?

JANET
Oh no, Aunt—

CLARICE
Were you alone?

PHILIP (*drawing on one boot*)
Certainly not.

CLARICE (*looking around*)
I don't understand. You're *alone.*

JANET
Just a minute, Aunt Clarice. I'll explain.

CLARICE (*getting angry*)
Well, you'll have a lot to explain. Everybody at the Gap is asking questions. Do you realize what a position you're in?

PHILIP (*sternly*)
Listen to me, Mrs. Pottle. I'll tell you what happened. I came here to see the owner of this cabin, Mrs. Whittaker, on business. Janet came with me. We started back to the Gap, but the storm came up. We couldn't go on. We had to stay here last night.

CLARICE (*acidly*)
You had to stay at a deserted cabin in the woods?

PHILIP (*hotly*)
Don't be absurd! We were not alone. The owner was here.

CLARICE
Absurd! I'm surprised at you, Phil Lake. I find you and my niece here alone. She in bed. You have the gall to stand there and talk about the storm, business and what-not. Nonsense!

PHILIP (*attempting to speak*)
I tell you—

CLARICE
Much of a gentleman you are! Your excuses don't hold water. If you had had the real interest in my niece you

would have brought her back to me the instant the storm was over. Instead, what do I find?

JANET (*from the bed*)

I tell you we couldn't get back. We couldn't cross the river.

CLARICE

If you have no respect for yourself, at least you should respect me. Get up and put your clothes on.

JANET

I can't find my clothes.

CLARICE (*awfully*)

You can't find your clothes! (*To* PHILIP.) What have you done with that child's clothes?

PHILIP (*the fact stunning him*)

I remember helping to take them off—

CLARICE (*shrieking*)

What?

PHILIP

Her boots, I mean.

JANET

Aunt Clarice, stop saying such silly things. There's nothing to it. When I came here last night, my clothes were soaked. The mountain woman who owns this cabin gave me a dress. We had some moonshine. I drank too much —and I didn't wake up until just now. I don't know what happened. The mountain woman must have put this gown on me and taken the other things.

CLARICE (*unable to believe her ears and genuinely disturbed*)

You say you don't know what happened to you. (*Walking over to* PHILIP.) Mr. Lake, this is an unpardonable thing for you to have done. (*Pause.*) There is just one thing you can do about it.

PHILIP (*seeking to mollify her*)

Now, I think you are taking an absurd attitude.

CLARICE

Don't try to put me off like that. You are a man of the world. You know what people will say.

PHILIP

But we were not alone. The owner of the cabin was here.

CLARICE (*unheeding, to* JANET)

What will your father say when this story reaches his ears? (*To* PHILIP, *significantly.*) There is only one honorable thing for you to do. I feel sure you will do it.

JANET (*running over to* CLARICE)

I won't have you saying such things. If you'd only wait a moment and *listen,* all this could be straightened out.

CLARICE (*shortly*)

If you don't know enough to guard your good name, I do. (*To* PHILIP) Well?

PHILIP (*sharply*)

What is it you want me to do?

CLARICE

In plain words, I think you two should be married.

PHILIP (*with dignity*)

We intend to be married. Janet and I are engaged. But please don't think it is because of this.

CLARICE (*almost to herself*)

Engaged! That's something like. (*To* PHILIP.) Well, the sooner you're married, the better.

(*Enter* LAUREL *with* JANET'S *dry clothing on her arm.*)

LAUREL (*quietly*)

Mornin' all.

JANET (*fervently*)

Oh, I'm *glad* you came!

PHILIP (*to* CLARICE)

She'll set your mind at rest. This is Mrs. Whittaker. She put us up last night.

CLARICE (*to* LAUREL)

Did these two spend the night here last night?

LAUREL

Shore.

CLARICE (*quickly*)

Where were you?

LAUREL (*thinking of the morning*)

I had to go out.

CLARICE (*hysterically*)
You went away and left them *alone?*
LAUREL
What matter?
CLARICE
Have you no notion of what is *proper?*
LAUREL (*seriously*)
I don't see no wrong in leaving young folks alone together —ef they're asleep.
CLARICE (*scornfully*)
Wilderness manners!
PHILIP
You're making a mountain out of a molehill! I was knocked out—in a fight.
JANET (*to* LAUREL)
Are these my clothes, Mrs. Whittaker? I want to dress.
LAUREL (*handing them to her*)
Yes. They're all dry now. I hung 'em outten doors.
CLARICE (*furiously, to* JANET)
You stay right here. I'll get to the bottom of this! You admit you were fighting. Janet had too much to drink. And nothing alters the fact that you spent the night together and ALONE!
LAUREL (*to* CLARICE)
Yo're all mixed up. Me an' the preacher had to go out soon this *mornin'!* I war here last night. They lodged the night here, but me an' her slept in yonder bed.
CLARICE
Oh!
JANET (*coldly, to* CLARICE)
Now that your mind's at rest I'd like to dress. (*To* LAUREL—*indicating ladder.*) May I go up here?
LAUREL
Shore.
(*Exit* JANET.)
CLARICE (*to* LAUREL)
Oh, I am confused. You should have been clearer. I understood you to say you were out last night. (*To*

PHILIP.) Do forgive me, Philip. I was half crazy with worry. I hardly know what I've been saying.

PHILIP (*glumly*)

It's all right.

CLARICE (*archly*)

You must admit it looked badly. I'm sorry I acted stupidly. But let's forget about it.

PHILIP

Let's.

CLARICE

So you and Janet are really engaged? I thought at first—

PHILIP

Yes.

CLARICE

Do allow me to congratulate you! You've always been one of my favorites, Philip. Janet is a dear sweet girl. You two are just made for each other.

PHILIP

Thank you. That's the way I feel about it.

(CLARICE *looks busily around. She opens door and peers about. She whispers to* LAUREL.)

LAUREL

We ain't got none. (CLARICE *whispers again.*) Out thar—'hint the hedge.

PHILIP (*sternly*)

That was a raw deal I got last night. I'd like to know what it was all about.

(LAUREL *is silent.*)

CLARICE (*falsely*)

Er—er—Excuse me. I want to powder my nose.

(*Exit* CLARICE.)

PHILIP

Who was up there last night? Why was I knocked out?

LAUREL

They didn't aim to hurt ye. (*Looks at his head.*) You got a lump like a goose aig on yore head. I'll wrop hit with vinegar an' brown paper.

PHILIP

Never mind that. I came here as your friend. Do you think I got a square deal?

LAUREL

I'm sorry to my heart that air happened. But it couldn't be holped. The boys thought you meant some harm to—

PHILIP

To whom?

LAUREL

My boy.

PHILIP

You mean he—

LAUREL

He run away. He war hid up thar last night.

PHILIP (*incredulously*)

Stevie?

LAUREL

He come here to see me. Then yo'all come an' I was a-feered ye'd make trouble. That gal— (*Catches herself.*) We had to git him outten the cabin 'thout yore knowin'.

PHILIP

Stevie escaped. And was here! I wish you had told us.

LAUREL

Don't open yore mouth to the little gal 'bout it. Don't tell nary livin' soul.

PHILIP

Trust me. I won't tell. Why didn't you tell me before?

LAUREL

He wore yore coat an' tuck yore horse. He had to. To git away. I'll pay. By an' by.

PHILIP

Forget the money! I'm glad he got away. But he may be caught and sent back.

LAUREL

With God's help he'll git to freedom.

PHILIP (*as* JANET *comes down the ladder*)

Count on me. I'm your friend.

(*Enter* JANET.)

JANET
Oh, I want a drink.

PHILIP (*going toward water-bucket*)
I'll go to the spring and get some fresh water. I guess I can find it.

JANET
I'll go with you.

LAUREL
Hit ain't fur. Take the down-side path to-ward the sun. I'll fix ye a cup o' coffee.

JANET
The fresh air will seem good.
(*Exit* JANET *and* PHILIP.)
(LAUREL *spreads the beds, then busies herself making coffee.*)
(*Enter* PLINY, *excited and hurried.*)

PLINY
Air ye alone? (*Rapidly.*) The Benges air after Stevie. They done got word he's out. The whole clan air scattered over the mountains.

LAUREL
Ain't he had time to make hit to New River?

PLINY
I air a-feared they got him hemmed in.

LAUREL (*hopefully*)
He air got a fast horse.

PLINY (*bothered, puzzled*)
I jest heered there's a horse dead down in Stony Wood. Hit war shot.

LAUREL (*stricken*)
Tell me. Air Stevie dead? Air ye keepin' somethin' f'm me?

PLINY
I don't know for sartin, Laurel.

LAUREL
Oh, God!

PLINY

He might be dead, but on t'other hand he might a' slipped thro' 'em.

LAUREL

He might be a-layin' out thar in the woods a-dyin'. I air goin' to seek him.

PLINY (*imperatively*)

No, Laurel. Yo're daft to think hit. They'll riddle ye full o' bullets.

LAUREL

But ef he's a-layin' dead in Stony Woods?

PLINY

Ef he air thar, I'll bring him home. Take heart. Ef he ain't thar—chances air that he's done made hit.

LAUREL

Make haste. My heart'll be shriveled till I know.

PLINY

When them waters war a-ragin an' the tempest a-blowin', what did Captain Jesus say?

LAUREL (*mechanically*)

Fear not!

PLINY

Shore. Don't worry, sister. God's on the side o' the widders an' the orphans.

LAUREL (*goes over to shelf and takes a double handful of cartridges*)

If ary Benge trys to stop ye, put one o' these in his heart.

PLINY (*loading his pistol*)

I ain't seekin' to bury no Benge, but they better not trifle with a sarvint of the Lord. Let not yore heart be troubled. I wouldn't worry so much. Stevie's smart. He'll make hit. He's bound to go down by Heart's Ease to ford the river. I done sent Doak an' Cutty thar to row him 'crost. I told 'em whar to find Grandpap Miller's boat. Now you jest go 'bout yore business ca'm as ever. If he air hurt an' in the bushes, I'll find him. If he air foot-loose an' wingin' his way to freedom, Doak an' Cutty air thar

to holp him. You lay low an' don't let on—no matter what happens.

(*Exit* PLINY.)

LAUREL (*looking after him; turns and prays aloud*)

Oh, God! Holp my boy. Don't let no Benges git him. Spread yore wings over him an' lift him outten danger.

(LAUREL *stoically goes about fixing the coffee, mending the fire, straightening up. She looks anxiously out of the window.*)

(*Enter* PHILIP *and* JANET.)

PHILIP (*setting water on bench*)

Gee, I spilled more of this water than I carried.

JANET

The road *was* rough.

LAUREL

Much obliged. Coffee's ready.

JANET

Oh, I hope you haven't bothered fixing breakfast.

LAUREL

Nothin' but coffee.

JANET

That's awfully kind of you.

PHILIP

A cup of black coffee will taste good to me.

JANET (*handing him cup*)

Does your head hurt?

(*Enter* CLARICE.)

PHILIP

My head! It feels like it is full of sawdust and muddy water.

JANET

This will make it feel better.

CLARICE

Oh, such a place! Every man I see has a gun.

LAUREL

Men with guns? Whar?

CLARICE (*complainingly*)
Just now one bounded over the hedge. A villainous creature. Needing a shave. I had no privacy.

PHILIP
Oh, that's nothing. Every one carries a gun in the mountains.

JANET (*handing her a cup of coffee*)
This is good and strong. It's *real* coffee.

CLARICE
Yes. Do give me something to quiet my nerves. The trip up this mountain was horrible and I dread going back. At every turn of the road we were stopped. It took hours for us to get here.

PHILIP
Who stopped you?

CLARICE
Oh, men asking questions.

LAUREL
What—what did they seek to larn?

CLARICE (*pettishly*)
Oh, it seems some murderer ran away from prison and the whole section is looking for him.
(*A distant shot is heard.* LAUREL *exits, quickly, wordlessly.*)

PHILIP
A shot!

CLARICE (*half-shrieking*)
What was that?

PHILIP
Some one hunting.
(*Exit* PHILIP.)

CLARICE
Oh, these mountains! Nothing but shots, murders and mud.

JANET
Some one hunting doves, maybe.

CLARICE (*guardedly*)
Janet, be frank. How far has this matter gone. You

two being here, I mean? Did he say you were engaged to protect you?

JANET (*exasperated*)

Nothing's happened. I'm still respectable. Didn't you believe Mrs. Whittaker?

CLARICE

I could see through her. She's in league with him. (*Whispering.*) Janet, I don't know what you've been up to and I don't care, since you got what you started out to get—Phil Lake. (*There is an ominous pause.*)

JANET

I can't do it.

CLARICE (*the remark not penetrating*)

If—er—anything incriminating has happened, so much the better. But you've got him where he can't wriggle out. (*Exultantly.*) And he asked you to marry him. How did you get him to the point?

JANET (*with scorn and weariness*)

I pretended I was engaged to another man.

CLARICE (*with satisfaction*)

That always works! It was clever of you, dear.

JANET

It was rotten of me. I was a fool. Phil Lake is big enough to marry the girl he loves, no matter what her circumstances. But he'd hate a counterfeit.

CLARICE

Stand by your guns. See it through! You have everything to gain by waiting until after you are married to tell him. Marry him to-day—just as soon as we get back.

JANET (*sadly*)

There won't be any wedding to-day. I'm afraid for me, there never will be. I'm going to lay my cards on the table. I can't *live* with myself, feeling like this.

CLARICE (*puzzled*)

Cards on table? What do you mean?

JANET

I mean I'm not going to marry Phil Lake. I'm going to tell him the truth. I can't go on with it.

CLARICE (*shocked*)

You silly goose! Have you lost your senses? Now that you've bagged him, do you mean to let him go? What are you thinking of? This is your golden chance. Who are you to quibble about the way you get him? A poor sparrow who doesn't know where her next evening dress is to come from? To give up and say (*mimics*) "I can't go on with it." Why, he has everything you lack. Money, social position, family. Your future is at stake.

JANET

You can't tell me what I'm losing. I know. But—I've made up my mind to tell him the truth.

CLARICE

You wouldn't tell him about the jail?

JANET

Yes. Everything.

CLARICE

But I told him your father was in politics! You'll tell him he's a *jailer*. A fine job! Nothing more than a nursemaid to a lot of dirty criminals.

JANET

Whatever else, I am not ashamed of my father.

CLARICE

But what a blow to his pride! He thinks you are popular —sought after! But tell him. Tell him when your doorbell rings it's only the sheriff locking up a drunken nigger. Tell him how you're ignored in your home-town. Tell him about the time you tried to have a party. How you invited twenty people and five came.

JANET (*wounded*)

Oh, don't! Don't!

CLARICE (*maliciously*)

Tell him how you cried yourself to sleep that night. Then you wanted to go away and be a trained nurse—but your father couldn't get on without you to help him keep the books. Tell him about your fine brother Geoffrey. He went away to college and squandered money while your father wore the same overcoat for six years. (*Plead-*

ingly.) Oh, Janet! With just a little grit, you could put all that behind you. For a rash, crazy whim at twenty, you'll suffer the rest of your life.

JANET

It's the only honorable thing to do.

CLARICE

Honorable! You're dying to be honorable with him. How about the promise you made me?

JANET (*feelingly*)

I had no right to promise anything like that. I really love him. I won't trick the man I love into marrying me.

CLARICE

Does he love *you?*

JANET

Yes.

CLARICE

Listen, Janet. If he loves you now—after you are married he will be mad about you. You can tell him anything and he'll forgive you. Trust me. I know men. You don't give me credit for it, but I'm fighting for your happiness.

JANET

I am grateful, Aunt Clarice. But you don't know what you're asking.

CLARICE

I'm asking you not to make a fool of yourself. When it's too late, you'll be sorry. If you don't marry Phil Lake, what is your future? You'll wind up by marrying a farmer. Raising chickens and children.

JANET

I love him. But marry? Not under false pretenses.

CLARICE

Hoity-toity! A conscience never got a woman a husband yet.

JANET

I don't want to offend you, Aunt Clarice. Nor hurt you, but I won't take advantage of his love. He *trusts* me.

CLARICE

Love! Fiddlesticks! That won't last! A husband will. And if he doesn't there's alimony. I have just this to say to you. I wash my hands of you forever. I've said that before, but this time I mean it. I'm going. If you're going to humble yourself to Phil Lake, I'll not be here to see it.

JANET

Oh, don't be angry, Aunt Clarice. Don't go away like this.

CLARICE

I will. I'm through.

JANET (*in a low voice*)

Sh! Here comes Phil now. (*Then so she can be heard.*) Just a minute, Aunt Clarice.

(*Enter* PHILIP *and* LAUREL.)

CLARICE (*picking up bag and gloves, making an effort to control herself*)

Good-by, Philip. I'm going. Perhaps I'll see you at the Gap. (*Looking at* JANET.) And perhaps I won't.

PHILIP

Surely. We'll see you at the Gap. Sorry you had to make this trip.

CLARICE (*to* LAUREL)

Good-by.

LAUREL

Good day.

JANET

But, Aunt Clarice, how are you going to get back?

CLARICE

The old fool who brought me down can take me back. (*To* JANET.) Come outside with me. I have something yet to say to you.

JANET (*resigned*)

All right. (*To* PHILIP.) I'll be back in a minute.

(*Exit* CLARICE *and* JANET.)

PHILIP (*to* LAUREL)

Don't worry. That shot might have meant any of a dozen things.

LAUREL (*anxiously*)

Accordin' to the sun he's had time to git a fur piece. Still an' all that bullet might a-pierced my baby's heart.

PHILIP

Leave it to Stevie. He knows every mountain path. He got a good start. I believe he's safe.

LAUREL

Oh I wish I knowed. Thar ain't no knowin' my misery.

PHILIP

No news is good news. I've a hunch he'll make it.

LAUREL

You don't know the danger he's in. He's beset by the law on the one side and hounded by the Benges on 'tother. One pore little Whittaker 'gainst a score o' Benges.

PHILIP (*impulsively*)

I want to help him. Direct me! Give me some idea of the way he went.

LAUREL

Lord, son, you got a kind heart, but this here's a wild country. Ye got to be reared here to find yore way about. If I don't git word frum him by midday, I aim to shoulder a musket my own self and take out to look fer him.

PHILIP

Don't fear for Stevie. He has courage and endurance. He's your son.

LAUREL

Aye.

(*Enter* JANET.)

JANET (*to* PHILIP)

Aunt Clarice has gone. Don't you think we'd better be going, too?

PHILIP

I'll have to see about getting a horse. Mine got away last night.

JANET (*surprised*)
How did that happen?

LAUREL
She wandered off.

(*The door of the cabin is suddenly thrown open.* STEVIE *runs into the room. He is muddy, panting and bloody. His arm hangs as though broken. He is hatless, but wears* PHILIP'S *coat. He stands for one instant and gazes at* JANET *when he recognizes her.*)

STEVIE
Mammy! Hide me. Quick! The shuruff—

JANET
Ste—Oh—oooooo.

LAUREL
Air ye shot? Air ye hurt?

STEVIE
They're after me. . . . They're right on my heels. . . .

PHILIP (*excitedly*)
Where can we hide him?

LAUREL
Let me bind up yore arm. . . .

STEVIE
No. No. Quick. Hide me.

LAUREL
Over here.

STEVIE (*looking straight at* JANET)
Mammy, don't let 'er give me up.

PHILIP
No. No. We shan't tell.

LAUREL (*to* PHILIP)
Holp me move this log.

(*There is a loose log in the wall which* LAUREL *wrenches out with* PHILIP'S *help. They help* STEVIE *into the vacancy.*)

LAUREL (*to* JANET)
When the shuruff comes, don't say nothin'—

PHILIP
No. . . . No. . . . Of course we won't.

LAUREL (*rapidly to* PHILIP)
Run out. See if ye catch sight of 'em—
PHILIP (*running*)
I'll whistle when I see them—
(*Exit* PHILIP.)
JANET
Stevie! Escaped!
LAUREL
And safe! Unlest you tell!
JANET
How did he get away. . . . When—
LAUREL
He never hurt nobody. Just run away. You won't send him back. I ain't a-goin' to let you. You shan't. . . .
JANET
But Daddy! I can't do that to him. I feel sorry for you and Stevie but. . . .
LAUREL
You can't put him back 'hint the bars. You know what he's facin'!
JANET
I don't want to be cruel, but I couldn't ever face my father again. . . .
LAUREL
Listen, you don't know what yo're talkin' about. The Benges are out. All over the mountains watchin' fer him. Ef you give him up, they'll take him away from the shuruff, an' lynch him. . . .
JANET
If he isn't safe with the sheriff, how can he be safe here?
LAUREL
Ef the shuruff comes and don't find him, the Benges won't come. The shuruff is thar friend and they trust him. He'll sarch but thar's a chance he won't find him. Stevie's done swore he won't be took—if thar's blood shed hit'll be yore wicked doin'. . . .
JANET
Oh—

LAUREL (*pleading*)

You can't send that pore hurt boy out to his death. I know yore pappy don't want no prisoner to git away. But he's jest a prisoner to yore pappy. He's my boy.

JANET

What can I do?

LAUREL (*urgently*)

They'll penitenture him or kill him. I ain't askin' you to do nothin' wrong. Jest don't say nothin'. We'll slip outten the mountains by night. We'll go to some fur country—Tennessee—or the like, and we'll never be heered of agin. (*They hear* PHILIP'S *warning whistle.*) The shuruff! Thar comin'!

(*Enter* SHERIFF *and* JAILER KENNEDY.)

JANET (*shocked*)

Daddy! *You* here?

KENNEDY (*hurriedly*)

Yes. Stevie got away. We're looking for him. (*To* LAUREL.) Laurel, the sheriff and me have got to search your house.

JANET (*stalling for time*)

Just a minute, Daddy. I want to explain how I happen to be here. . . .

KENNEDY

I know. I met Clara on the road. She told me you were here. Laurel, if Stevie is hiding here, I want you to tell me.

LAUREL

I ain't seen him.

KENNEDY

Laurel, trust me! He'll be safer with me than he is hiding here. The Benges are out.

LAUREL

He ain't here.

KENNEDY

I have reason to believe that Stevie is hidden in this cabin.

LAUREL

Yo're wrong.

KENNEDY (*hurrying*)

Laurel, I am an officer of the law. I've got to do my duty. I must search your house. (*To* SHERIFF.) Sheriff, give me a hand. (KENNEDY *and the* SHERIFF *move about the cabin searching.*)

SHERIFF (*moving a barrel*)

Maybe that gal can tell us somethin'.

KENNEDY (*still searching*)

That's my little girl, Sheriff. If she knew anything, she'd tell me.

LAUREL

She don't know nothin' 'bout hit.

KENNEDY (*moving the bed*)

There is such a thing as pulling the wool over a little girl's eyes.

SHERIFF

This cabin's as bare as a hound's tooth. There ain't no place fer him to hide.

KENNEDY

We're not through looking yet. Sheriff, you search the outhouses. I'll take a look in the loft. (*As* SHERIFF *exits.*) If you see Mr. Lake tell him I'd like to see him. (SHERIFF *exits through front door of cabin.* KENNEDY *exits up ladder.* JANET *runs over to* LAUREL. *Both women lower their voices.*)

JANET

I've got to tell Daddy! I won't lie to him!

LAUREL (*guardedly*)

You don't have to lie. Jest don't say nothin'.

JANET (*trying to convince* LAUREL)

It's as Daddy says. Stevie's better off with him. He's in terrible danger here.

LAUREL

The Benges don't worry me now. (*Pointing upward.*) It's him. Don't tell!

JANET

You don't know what you are asking. I can't.

LAUREL (*poignantly*)
I kept yore secret. . . .

JANET
That's all over. Tell him if you like. It isn't that. I can't go back on him. He's my father.

LAUREL (*passionately*)
He's my child. He's all I got. Don't harden yore heart. What does a lie matter? Jest upholdin' yore pappy. To *me* hit means savin' Stevie. The only thing I got in the world you want to take away from me.

JANET
I'm sorry for you and Stevie. But I can't lie to my father. He means too much to me.

LAUREL
What do you know about sorrer? Yore full o' frippery. You want to tread on my heart jest so you can be yore pappy's good gal. I tell you, you can't do hit. He ain't yore pappy now. He's the law.

JANET
Yes. And the law may save him. Stevie's sentence may be commuted.

LAUREL
Aye! Ef they do. Stevie put 'hint lock and bars forever. Ef they don't spare him, he'll be burnt to death by yore law. (*Urgently.*) You'd lay a pore crippled bird back in hits nest, an' let hits mammy take keer o' hit. I ain't askin' no more'n that.
(*Enter* PHILIP.)

PHILIP (*excited but in a low tone*)
I covered his tracks. (*Indicating* STEVIE.) Where are the officers?

LAUREL (*pointing upward*)
Sarchin'! (*Turns pleadingly to* PHILIP.) She's aimin' to tell. Tell her she can't do hit. Maybe she'll heed you!

PHILIP (*unbelieving*)
Oh no, Janet! Don't. You can't do that!

JANET (*coming over to him earnestly*)
I must. It's like this, Phil. . . .
(*As she speaks the jailer starts to descend the ladder.*)

PHILIP
No. Please. Let's take a chance. Give the boy a break. . . .
(KENNEDY *descends the ladder.*)

KENNEDY
Laurel, before I came here, I had information that Stevie was in this locality last night. I believe he is here, now. In this cabin. (*Pause.*) I'm asking a hard thing. Hand him over to me.

LAUREL
I can't. He ain't here. He ain't been here.

KENNEDY
You have no right to harbor him. Though you are his mother you must obey the law.

LAUREL
Jailer, I'm tellin' you the truth.

KENNEDY
Will you give me your oath?

LAUREL (*firmly holding up her right hand*)
'Fore God he ain't here!

KENNEDY (*penetratingly to* PHILIP)
Mr. Lake, you were at the jail to see Stevie Whittaker. You know him.

PHILIP
Yes.

KENNEDY
Did you see him here last night?

PHILIP
No.

KENNEDY
You heard nothing of a suspicious nature?

PHILIP (*reluctantly*)
No. I can't say that I did.

KENNEDY (*to every one*)
I reckon I don't need to tell you all that harboring or aiding an escaped prisoner is breaking the law.
(*There is a silence.*)
KENNEDY (*to* PHILIP)
Are you short a horse?
PHILIP (*surprised*)
Yes—
KENNEDY
How does that happen?
LAUREL (*quickly*)
Hit broke tether and wandered off. . . .
KENNEDY (*significantly*)
Mountain people don't shoot horses that wander off. I saw a dead horse when I come by. (*Looking suspiciously at* LAUREL.) It was a well kept mare with a good saddle. (*Pauses.*) Sometimes a horse is shot from under a man. Especially when he's a fugitive from justice and has enemies layin' for him. (*To* PHILIP.) When did you miss your horse?
PHILIP
This morning—
(*Enter* SHERIFF. *The* SHERIFF *runs into the room with a piece of* STEVIE'S *shirt.*)
SHERIFF (*holding up the evidence*)
I found this here hanging on a gooseberry bush. Hit's fresh tore and got blood on hit.
KENNEDY (*takes the cloth and examines it carefully*)
A piece of the prison shirt that Stevie wore. (*Turning to* LAUREL.) Laurel, it's as I thought. Stevie's here. You've lied to me!
LAUREL (*with feeling*)
Oh, no . . . no. . . .
KENNEDY (*pulling* STEVIE'S *cap from his pocket*)
Then how do you explain this? Stevie's cap. He wore it when he ran off. (*Holding out the cloth.*) And this! With blood on it!

LAUREL (*huskily*)

I did lie to you. He war here last night. (*Indicating* JANET *and* PHILIP.) They don't know nothin' 'bout hit. I got him out when they war asleep. I told him to take that man's horse. He's lit out. He's a fur piece by now.

KENNEDY

With a horse shot from under him? No, Laurel. He's here. . . . Or close by.

SHERIFF

Jailer, (*pointing to* PHILIP *and* LAUREL) him an' Laurel done got their heads together. They're stickin' to the same tale. We got to sep'rate 'em. I'll take him outten 'hint the barn and question him, whilst you try to git the truth f'm Laurel. Then we'll see if their stories match.

PHILIP

I've told you all I know, but I'll be glad to answer any questions.

KENNEDY

All right, go ahead. I want to get at the bottom of this. I'm determined to take that lad back with me if I have to tear this cabin down.

(*Exit* PHILIP *and* SHERIFF.)

(*To* LAUREL.)

I've tried to befriend you and Stevie, Laurel. Why do you make things hard for me? Come out with the truth.

JANET (*very pale but resolutely*)

Father, Stevie was here last night. I know he was. I saw him.

KENNEDY (*wheeling around*)

What! You saw him? You didn't tell me?

JANET

He left here last night on Phil's horse. I've been here all morning. I know he has not come back.

KENNEDY

Where is he now? Tell me. . . .

JANET

I promised Laurel. . . .

KENNEDY

Do you know what you are saying?

JANET

Forgive me, Daddy. When I saw him so near to freedom I couldn't betray him. I helped him to get away.

KENNEDY

You helped him? I can't believe it.

JANET

Oh, Daddy, don't be angry. Why, I know in your heart you wanted Stevie to be free. You were trying every way to help him. You said yourself he'd never had a chance. I didn't do anything but give him that chance—

KENNEDY

Yes, I tried to help him, but in the right way. The lawful way. You've not only broken the law but you've turned your back on me. And I thought I could trust you. I thought you'd stand by me to the last ditch. Where are the principles I've tried to teach you? This is what comes of high living with your aunt. You lost sight of the worth while things—principle and truth—

JANET

I couldn't do anything else. I couldn't send him to the chair.

KENNEDY

A jury of twelve men tried and convicted him. What right had you to interfere with the law and let him go scot-free? It's no more than I'd expect of Laurel to shield her own. But you! You had no more right to help Stevie escape from this cabin than you would have to unlock the jail door.

LAUREL (*straining with dread lest* JANET *weaken*)

Jailer, don't blast yore anger on yore gal. You'll live to see the day when ye'll say she done right. God'll give ye eyes to see that His critters come afore the law. She's a-carin' for you same as ever. She wasn't aimin' to put shame on you. She showed mercy to them that was trompled by misery.

KENNEDY

She was carried away by her heart but that don't excuse her. Right is right. Duty and loyalty mean little to my children.

JANET

Daddy, I didn't mean to hurt you. You must see that I couldn't—

KENNEDY

I'm going. Janet, I want you to come home and settle down. No more of this gallivantin' in society. When will you be home?

JANET

To-morrow.

(*Enter* PHILIP *and the* SHERIFF.)

SHERIFF

He don't know nothin'. But I never will believe he knows as little as he lets on.

KENNEDY

It's all right. I'm convinced that Stevie is not here.

SHERIFF

There's just one more place we *might* look.

KENNEDY

Where's that?

SHERIFF

The still.

LAUREL

He ain't thar.

SHERIFF

Laurel's sharp. She's good at hidin' things. I know she's got a still but I ain't been able to locate hit.

KENNEDY (*dully*)

We'll take a look.

SHERIFF (*exiting*)

God knows, Laurel, I ain't carin' how much moonshine you make, but we gotta do our duty.

LAUREL (*exiting*)

I'll lead the way.

(*Exit* SHERIFF, LAUREL *and* KENNEDY.)

PHILIP (*lowering his voice*)
Thank God they didn't find him. What convinced the jailer he wasn't here?

JANET
I did.

PHILIP (*surprised*)
You did.

JANET
I lied. I said that Stevie had left here and had not come back.

PHILIP (*whistling softly*)
And they believed you.

JANET
Yes. Do you know who that was? The jailer, I mean? My father.

PHILIP (*not quite understanding the significance*)
Your father. . . . I don't understand. Oh, I know him, Janet. I've been to his house.

JANET
That's my father. The best and sweetest father a girl ever had. And I've lied to him.

PHILIP
But that—you had to. You couldn't let them take that poor boy.

JANET
I did it so Stevie could be free. It's all a tangle. Everybody deserves freedom and happiness. I wanted to give Stevie a chance. To give him that chance I deceived my father. I've lied to you, too. I'm not what you think I am. I know you are going to hate me, but I must tell you the truth.

PHILIP
Not what I think you are? What do you mean?

JANET
I've pretended. Cheated. Evaded, everything just to get my chance of happiness. I've made you believe I had money. I haven't a cent. That I've a social background. Haven't. I lived at the jail. Family. Our people came

to Kentucky a hundred years ago but we're middle class and obscure. I did it all because I loved you. Then, when you loved me, and believed in me, I was ashamed of myself but I couldn't tell you the truth. To-day I knew I couldn't go on with it. I couldn't let you marry me. I knew you'd hate me, afterward. Not for being what I am, but for being so cheap and petty as to deceive you.

PHILIP

Don't, Janet! That hurts. I won't believe you deceived me!

JANET

I did. I did. I wanted you to propose to me. There is no other man. I invented him so you'd hurry our marriage. I tried to take a short cut to happiness by closing my eyes to facts. I thought we'd be married and go away and you'd never know.

PHILIP (*with feeling*)

I never gave a thought to your fine feathers. I wasn't looking for society tinsel. It was *you* I loved. I can't bear the thought I mattered so little. That all you wanted was a husband.

JANET

Oh, Phil, whatever else, don't think that of me! I tell you I love you. I fell in love with you at White Sulphur. I wanted to tell you then but I was afraid.

PHILIP

Afraid?

JANET

Yes. I thought if you knew my circumstances you wouldn't allow yourself to become interested in me. It was so sweet loving you that I hadn't the courage to risk the truth. I was a coward. I wanted to remove the barriers between us. Instead of tearing them down I only covered them up.

PHILIP (*thinking and looking sadly at* JANET)

I wish you had told me the truth from the beginning.

JANET

Oh, Philip, you'll never know how unhappy I was. I was

just like a prisoner. When I saw a door open to freedom and happiness, I took it just as Stevie did. (*Sobs.*)

PHILIP (*pityingly*)

But after building your house of cards—why did you knock it down? You needn't have told me all this. You could have married me. . . .

JANET

Because I loved you too much to marry you with such a shadow between us. I wanted your respect. Your confidence. Everything that makes love last—

PHILIP (*touched*)

You've told me everything that's on your heart, my darling?

JANET

Yes.

PHILIP

I think I understand, Janet. Don't cry. I feel humble before you. It doesn't matter—

JANET

What does anything matter? I've lost you. I was disloyal to my father—

PHILIP

About deceiving your father. You did it to give a human being a chance. I think that was big and fine.

JANET

I wasn't being big or fine. I wanted him to be free. I *couldn't* send him back. I've heard that prison door clang too often. I've heard condemned men walking up and down the corridors. I've seen them being dragged away at dawn. I've seen mothers straining their boys to them through bars. I've heard the saddest music in the world. Prisoners singing. Keys jangling. Shuffling feet. Screams. Tears. I felt as though I couldn't stand it any more. . . . Now I'm going back to it.

PHILIP

You're not. I love you. You're coming with me. My darling's heart shan't be hurt any more.

JANET

I don't want you to pity me or be sorry for me. I only wanted you to understand—

PHILIP

It isn't that. If you had told me all this back at White Sulphur I might not have understood so well as I do now. Being here in the mountains—getting close to things that really matter—Stevie, his mother, everything—has sort of gotten under my skin. I see things differently. . . . As for you—I've seen your heart. Janet, if I loved you yesterday, I adore you now.

(LAUREL *enters triumphantly.*)

LAUREL

They're gone!

PHILIP

Are you sure?

LAUREL

I watched 'em outten sight. (*To* JANET *as she moves toward* STEVIE'S *hiding place.*) I can't *never* thank you enough for what you done.

JANET (*simply*)

I wanted Stevie to be free—

LAUREL (*to* PHILIP)

Holp me git him out—

PHILIP

You're sure it's safe?

LAUREL

Yes.

PHILIP (*helping* STEVIE)

That's the way, old man.

STEVIE

I'm sick, Mammy. Lay me down.

(PHILIP *and* LAUREL *assist him to a chair.*)

LAUREL

You're goin' to be all right now, honey. Mammy'll take keer o' you.

STEVIE (*wearily closing his eyes*)

I thought you'd never git shet o' them.

LAUREL

Yore all tired and hurted. Mammy'll wrop up yore arm. Jest as soon as yo're able, we'll steal off to some fur country where this will be all unbeknown.

PHILIP

Yes, and I'll see to it that you are paid enough for your land to give you a start. We're going now.

STEVIE

Good-by, Miss Janet. I shore am much obliged to *you.*

JANET

Good-by, Stevie. Be careful. You have a long journey ahead of you.

LAUREL

Farewell. I hope luck will go with ye all yore days. (*To* PHILIP *indicating* JANET.) Be good to her. Thar ain't nary queen better'n her. (*To* JANET *brokenly.*) I hope some day God'll give you a boy like mine.

PHILIP

I hope so, too. Good-by, Stevie. Good luck.
(*Exit* PHILIP *and* JANET.)

STEVIE

Mammy—like you say—we'll go to some fur country for the time bein', but we'll come back. (*Vengefully.*) And God knows *that'll* be a sad day for the Benges.

LAUREL

God knows what's writ in the stars.

Curtain

APPENDIX

WHO'S WHO IN *COPY, 1930*

MARY BARBER writes: "There is very little that I can give you for the Appendix to *Copy*. My educational 'history' consists of two years of High School and a poetry course by mail from Columbia.

"And promiscuous reading!

"I was born in Greenwich, New York, in 1896, and came to Brooklyn in 1916. A few poems have appeared in the poetry magazines. I work on correspondence for a company who call themselves 'perfectors of the permanent wave' —quite a different kind of rhythm." To which we might add that Miss Barber won the *Copy, 1926* prize for her poem, "Tremor."

Gertrude Ryder Bennett was born in Brooklyn, New York, received her B.S. from New York University and her M.A. in 1927 from Columbia University. She is a member of the Writers Club, The Poetry Society of America, the League of American Pen Women, and other literary societies. She has contributed poems to the *Century,* the *Commonweal,* the *Bookman,* the *Delineator,* the *Ladies' Home Journal,* the *Churchman,* the *Sewanee Review,* the *American Poetry Magazine, America,* the *Step Ladder, Palms,* the *People's Popular Monthly, Holland's, Contemporary Verse, Some Recent New York University Verse,* the *New York Herald Tribune,* the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle,* and other magazines and newspapers; and her work has been

reprinted in *The Literary Digest,* Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse, Copy, 1927, Copy, 1929* and various other anthologies.

M. C. Blackman says: "I was born near Shreveport, La., twenty-seven years ago. I attended Louisiana State University and the University of Missouri, but was not graduated from either. Since leaving school I have worked on newspapers in Shreveport, Little Rock, Ark., Detroit, Paris (France), and am now feature editor of the *Arkansas Gazette.* I am married and have one son, seven weeks old to-day. *Hot Copy* was my first short story. Other stories: 'Ten Years,' *Plain Talk,* July, 1929; 'Middlemen,' *Plain Talk,* October, 1929; 'Not the Real Thing,' *College Life,* October, 1929; 'A Good Little Feature,' *Liberty,* December 28, 1929; 'Bad Blood,' forthcoming issue of the *Forum;* 'The Kid Brother'; forthcoming issue of *Boy's Life.* 'Ten Years' was rejected by *Plain Talk;* rewritten according to suggestions from my Home Study English instructor, resubmitted to *Plain Talk,* and accepted."

Ruth Blodgett comes from Boston, and her forbears came from Maine. She has written "off and on." About a dozen of her short stories have been published; and her novel *Birds Got to Fly* was brought out this fall by Harcourt Brace. Her early story "Tent Poles" was reprinted from Scribner's in *Copy, 1924.*

From Moe Bragin: "I was born about twenty-eight years ago in Russia, and at the age of four came to America. After having attended the New York public schools and City College and Columbia, I managed to get a position in a private school teaching the common branches to rebellious fledglings. Summers I generally work on farms. Some of my poems were accepted by *Poetry* and *Frontier,* and 'A Japanese Kimono' was printed by *Brith Sholom News.* My two greatest ambitions are to write a fine story and plow a field without having to 'cut and cover.' "

Lois Canfil is a member of the Sisterhood of Saint Mary, St. Mary's Convent, Peekskill, New York. Other publications, besides the present one, have been stories for children in the *Young Churchman,* and a few poems in *American Poetry Magazine,* the *Lyric,* and other magazines.

Anne Collins and Alice Timoney, co-authors of *Wilderness Road,* are sisters and native Kentuckians, though residents of New York for the past ten years. Mrs. Collins was educated in public and private schools in the South. During the War she was associated with the Juvenile League of the Red Cross whose state headquarters were in Louisville. In that city Mrs. Collins did newspaper work and later in New York was assistant to the Editor of the *Independent Magazine;* from this she passed to publicity and has free-lanced for various New York dailies.

Jane Crosby says: "I was born in Bradford, Pennsylvania, an oil town which calls itself 'the high grade oil metropolis of the world,' in 1904. I attended the Baldwin School at Bryn Mawr for two years. I also attended the Katherine Gibbs School in Boston for two years. During 1926 and 1927 I studied at Columbia University. My first published short story, 'The Unholy Martyr,' appeared in *Plain Talk.* I have a short story, 'She Came with Glamour,' in February *Scribner's.* I want to write more than anything else in the world and have no other occupation than writing."

Dorothy Perkins Estabrook writes as follows: " 'Ugly' was my first story, and since that, I have written four others and sold two. As for the rest, I was born in Newark, New York State, on July 7th, 1895; graduated from Abbott Academy in Andover, studied for one year at Syracuse University, and then for two more at William Smith College, in Geneva, New York. After that I married. I have two children, a boy eleven, and a girl of nine. A couple of years ago it occurred to me that it would be interesting to write, so I enrolled with Columbia in a Home Study course, not with any idea that I'd

ever be able to publish anything, but just for my own amusement. No one was more surprised than I when I was advised by my instructor to send 'Ugly' to Brandt and Brandt and when *Collier's* bought it."

Dorothy Belle Flanagan: "As for biographical data: I was born in Kansas City, Missouri, August 10, 1904. I attended private school and the University of Missouri. Was graduated from the latter's school of Journalism and did some newspaper work in Kansas City and later in New York. That and traveling is all that I have done since leaving school, and I haven't any professional occupation other than that of a writer. Most of my writing has been poetry —rather, most of my published writing. It has been appearing in the magazines for four years. I'm really only getting started in short story. Had one in *The Midland* a year and a half ago, then came to Columbia and studied and have sold quite a few since. I suppose I might mention the myriads of odd jobs I've done: teaching Italian youngsters with a social service group, writing and producing musical shows, editing the Missouri magazine of the League of Women Voters, and a great deal of pianistic work."

Grace Kellogg Griffith was born in Maine and brought up in Brookline, Massachusetts. She is a graduate of Smith and taught for three years in Constantinople College, Turkey. There she met and was married to Major Dison Griffith, a graduate of Princeton. She returned with her husband to the United States and for the next ten years definitely gave up all idea of a personal career in favor of complete devotion to home-making. She has four children, two girls and two boys. At the end of the ten-year period, she returned in earnest to her writing, which she had never, of course, been able entirely to give up. Since then she has published three novels, *The Mould, The House,* and *The Silent Drum,* has a fourth completed in manuscript and the fifth and sixth on the way.

G. A. Hansen is the pen name of an officer in the United States Army.

Harry Huse's autobiography is crisply businesslike: "Born April 15, 1890, in Fullerton, Nebraska; educated in Fullerton Public School, Lincoln, Nebraska, High School and State University of Nebraska, A.B., 1911. Engaged in business—advertising and selling—1911 to 1917. Captain, 810th Pioneer Infantry, during the War. Business same as before 1919-1925. Took Columbia University Extension courses in Short Story Writing, Spring term 1925. First stories published in *The Midland.* Subsequent stories published in *Adventure, Short Stories,* and *The Frontier,* and in the Magazine Section, *New York World,* and the *World's Best Short Stories of 1929.* Devote all my time to writing. Residence, West Redding, Conn., and Fort Benton, Montana."

George W. Jacobs, author of *Negro Authors Must Eat,* was born in Savannah, Ga., on December 27, 1901. He was graduated from Howard University, Washington, D. C., in 1925. At present he is a graduate student of English at Columbia University. His primary interest is the presentation of every gradation of Negro life through the medium of the novel.

Elizabeth McNeely Kehr: "I live in Washington, D. C., where I am a member of the editorial staff of the American Junior Red Cross. I was born at Lakeside (now Hubbard Woods), Illinois, but at the age which the child welfarists would no doubt refer to as the 'late pre-school' I migrated southward to East Tennessee, where I received my schooling and developed a complex for mocking birds and mountains. I have mixed five colleges, Maryville in Tennessee, Randolph-Macon in Virginia, and Cornell, George Washington and Columbia Universities, the next to the last named giving me my A.B. in 1922. At Columbia I studied in the magazine articles course. Two other signed articles, 'Vienna's Own

Song-Maker' and 'Mr. Yen, Big Teacher,' both biographical and for children, have appeared in print."

John Kemmerer is an instructor in the Home Study department at Columbia. He writes: "I was born in Iowa in 1901, and have studied at Grinnell, Harvard, and Columbia. Besides the stories to appear in *Copy,* other stories of mine have appeared in *Book Notes, Salient,* and *Blues."* Mr. Kemmerer also does book criticism for the *Bookman.*

Colonel Charles J. Naylor: "Born October 3, 1875, Philadelphia, Pa. Schooled at William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia; U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis; U. S. Military Academy, West Point. Worked as pattern-maker and draughtsman in iron foundry, and as reporter on *Philadelphia Press.* Served through all grades from Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Colonel in U. S. cavalry in various parts of the United States, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands; also on varied duty during the War from an infantry battalion to the War Department. Left active duty in 1921. No present occupation besides writer. Have published little, and am in the red account of postage." (From *Copy, 1929.*) Colonel Naylor was the first president of the Writers Club.

Victor F. Nelson knew Thomas Mott Osborne well, as he was a kind of secretarial assistant to the latter when Nelson was unfortunate enough to be confined in Auburn. Mr. Nelson took his course in Magazine Article Writing in the Home Study Department. He has sold several articles and has also published a translation from the Danish. Mr. Nelson is Swedish by birth but came here when he was two years of age. He is now thirty-one.

George T. Rayner's biographical sketch is also taken from *Copy, 1929:* "I was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1903. My education has been grammar school, a trip abroad, and numerous rejection slips. I first published (at the age of

thirteen) an article in the *New York Evening Globe;* then at seventeen, I won one hundred dollars in a poetry contest. Since then I have published short stories in magazines varying from the *Midland,* down through the *Oracle, College Stories, Marriage,* hitting bottom with several confections for the confession magazines." "Life and Death on Ninety-Fifth Street," Mr. Rayner's contribution to *Copy, 1929,* was listed in the Roll of Honor of Mr. O'Brien's *Best Short Stories of 1928.*

Dorothy C. Reid says that if editors should ever lose interest in her as a writer she would spend but little time worrying about her living, should it be necessary for her to earn it, for before she married Albert T. Reid, the well-known artist and newspaper man, or her work appeared in *McCall's* and other magazines, she supported herself and daughter (by a previous marriage) by means of a business career. After her marriage to Mr. Reid she devoted herself to being a wife and mother. Now that the daughter is grown up she is giving her time to writing. She likes it.

Nellie B. Sergent writes: "I am sending you the following short and simple annals: Graduate of Smith College; M.A. from Columbia; editor of *The Evander Childs Anthology of Student Verse;* teacher of English at Evander Childs High School, New York City."

Florida Watts Smyth (Mrs. A. R.): author of two early books of verse; Graduate of Mary Institute, a department of Washington University, St. Louis; won Wednesday Club Verse Prize (1926) and Missouri Verse Prize for best poem on Missouri (offered by the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, 1928); Honorable Mention in Contest for Poems on Peace offered by *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse,* November, 1929; contributor to *Poetry; London Poetry Review, Contemporary Verse, Japm;* the *Gypsy;* the *Harp; Bozart; Troubadour; Kaleidoscope; Driftwind; Westward; Poetry World; Star-Dust; Carillon;* and other poetry magazines;

Literary Digest; Sea Stories; Parents' Magazine; Braithwaite's and other anthologies. Mrs. Smyth is also an enthusiastic traveler. She is doing her work with Columbia in the Home Study Department.

Alice Timoney attended the public schools in Danville, Kentucky, and Kentucky College for Women. At present she is a member of the Advertising Department of The Equitable Trust Company of New York where she edits the company's magazine, the *Equitable Envoy.* She is the author of short stories and verse and collaborated with her sister on four plays, two of which have been produced. Their best known work is *Bottled in Bond* which was seen in New York at the Booth Theatre.

Worth Tuttle (Mrs. Walter Page Hedden): Born in Raleigh, North Carolina, educated at Duke University (A.B. 1916) and at Columbia in the School of Journalism. Studied short story writing at Columbia and eventually "placed" most of the stories written. Has contributed essays and reviews to the *Atlantic, Harper's, Saturday Review, New Republic, American,* and others. Contributed to the new edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica* a number of miscellaneous articles and literary biographies, among them being those of Emily Dickinson and Ambrose Bierce. Has recently finished a three-act play, *African Anthem,* and a novel, *Prism.* Lives in Larchmont, New York, and has three children.

Annie Balcomb Wheeler was born and brought up in the Salem of witchcraft fame. She formerly contributed considerable material—household articles, and juvenile verse and stories—to a number of magazines, to farm and religious weeklies, and Sunday-school publishing houses. After the war with Spain, when Mrs. Wheeler was left with a young child, she found the pressure of home duties made it impracticable to continue pen work with any degree of regularity. Upon moving to Mount Vernon a few years ago, she

resumed her work and study, and took a spring term at the College of the City of New York where she won first prize in the closing contest of the Poetry Writing Class. She was also fortunate as to prizes with the Westchester Poetry Society. This was followed by extension courses at Columbia where, she says, "I am trying to make up for lost time." Her first book of verse, *Footpaths and Pavements,* was published by Dorrance and Co. last November.

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